



## Bench-Bar Meeting Explores Stable Funding for Branch

More than 100 leaders from the judiciary and the bar came together in December to discuss an important issue for both groups: ensuring a stable and adequate budget for the California court system. The meeting was a significant step toward that goal.

Chief Justice Ronald M. George convened the meeting—dubbed “Securing Stable Funding for Justice”—to:

- Highlight the volatility of current budget mechanisms;
- Provide a background for the policy goals involved with state funding of trial courts;
- Facilitate discussions of potential options for stabilizing the courts’ finances; and
- Help set the direction of a special commission that he will soon appoint to address these issues.

“The need to find solutions that will keep our courts accessible to all who need their services has never been greater,” said Chief Justice George in his opening remarks. “To succeed, we must establish funding for the judicial system that will be adequate in good fiscal times and in bad. A strong and independent judicial system is not a luxury to be afforded only when the economy is strong; the judicial branch’s ability to provide essential services to the public should not ebb and flow with the capital gains revenue received by the state.”

### CURRENT BUDGET MECHANISMS

After opening remarks from the Chief Justice and State Bar President Tony Capozzi, Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey started the plenary session by presenting an overview of the state’s budget process and how the judicial branch fits into it. Mr. Vickrey explained how the budget process works; why court budgets sometimes fluctuate; how budget reductions are administered; and the branch’s working relationship with the Governor, Department of Finance, and Legislature.

The session also included a panel discussion featuring Senators Joseph Dunn and Richard Ackerman; Superior Court of Sacramento County Judge Michael T. Garcia, a Judicial Council member; and Finance Director Tina Hansen and Office of Governmental Affairs Director Ray LeBoV, both from the

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The panelists answered participants’ questions from their varied perspectives, sharing insights on funding issues. They also described their experiences in advocating for the courts and the challenges faced by the branch in the budget process.

### PARTICIPANTS PROVIDE INPUT

The meeting not only provided participants with an in-depth look at the budget process but also asked them to explore potential solutions and ideas for sufficiently funding the courts. The participants were divided into discussion groups that focused on three specific issues: planning for the soon-to-be-appointed Commission to Secure Stable Funding for Justice, advocating for the branch in 2004 and beyond, and ensuring access to the courts.

The groups of judicial and bar leaders brainstormed about many ideas, such as including members from all justice system stakeholders on the planned funding commission; creating workload and/or staffing standards in the courts; emphasizing the importance of funding consistency so courts can plan their budgets on a multiyear basis; involving more businesses and court users in advocating for the justice system; and identifying for the Governor and Legislature the potential effects of reduced court services on children, domestic violence victims, and other disenfranchised individuals.



Panelists at the Securing Stable Funding for Justice meeting described their experiences in advocating for the judicial branch and the challenges faced by the branch in the budget process. Left to right: Senator Joseph Dunn, Senator Richard Ackerman, Superior Court of Sacramento County Judge Michael T. Garcia, and AOC Finance Director Tina Hansen. AOC Office of Governmental Affairs Director Ray LeBoV also was a panelist.

### COMMISSION AND WORKING GROUP

One of the goals of the meeting was to help define the agenda and objectives for the Commission to Secure Stable Funding for Justice, which the Chief Justice is expected to appoint early this year. Over the long term, the commission will consider and make recommendations about changes in the budgeting process. These changes may include a broad range of options, such as potential sources of funds for the courts, implementation of workload-based funding formulas, and changes in the way the judicial branch budget is submitted to and reviewed by the other two branches of government.

In addition, a working group that includes court representatives and legal practitioners will review and make recommendations related to court fees. In time for this year’s budget process, the working group will recommend measures to ensure

*Continued on page 6*

## IN THIS ISSUE

BENCH-BAR BUDGET SUMMIT .....	1
COUNCIL OPERATIONAL PLAN.....	1
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE.....	2
JUDICIAL COUNCIL ACTION.....	3
CHANGES TO JUDICIAL ETHICS CODE.....	3
SUPREME COURT IN SAN JOSE .....	3
IN THE NEWS .....	4
HR UPDATE .....	5
L.A. CONSULATE STAFFS VISIT COURT.....	5
HUMBOLDT EMERGENCY LINE .....	5
REGIONAL OFFICE UPDATE.....	6
COLLABORATIVE JUSTICE UPDATE .....	7
TECHNOLOGY UPDATE .....	7
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS.....	8
YEAR IN REVIEW .....	9
Q&A WITH JUSTICE EPSTEIN .....	13
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.....	14
FEDS APPROVE CALIF. FOSTER CARE .....	14
KLEPS AWARD WINNERS .....	15
EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT.....	17
RESOURCES.....	17
COURT BRIEFS .....	18
JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS.....	19
MILESTONES.....	19
AOC-TV GUIDE .....	19
CALENDAR.....	20

## Planning for the Future of the Branch

JACK URQUHART

The Judicial Council on December 5 adopted a new operational plan that will direct and inform the work of the council and its advisory committees, the California courts, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) over the next three years. The plan, *Leading Justice Into the Future: Operational Plan for California’s Judicial Branch*, identifies 14 high-priority objectives to improve the administration of justice in the state and ensure equal access to justice for all Californians.

### CREATING THE PLAN

The planning process, guided by the council’s Executive and Planning Committee over a period of 11 months, was shaped by the dueling realities of increasing needs and decreasing resources—realities that necessitate highly focused prioritizing. Throughout the planning process, participants were aware that challenging times underscore the need to affirm the judicial branch as an independent, co-equal branch of government.

Judge Jack Komar of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County, a member of the council’s

Executive and Planning Committee, explained in a recent *Court News* interview that the branch “needs to establish a higher level of operational and administrative credibility so that the other branches of government will recognize it as a co-equal branch.” He also noted that, “in order to acquire this level of independence, the branch as a whole needs to take a serious look at the way it does business.”

Council members, presiding judges, court executive officers, advisory committee members, representatives of the bar and Legislature, and AOC directors and managers all took part in the planning process. The council carefully considered all parties’ input, paying particular attention to an analysis of the local

*Continued on page 6*



## 2003 YEAR IN REVIEW

In its annual chronology of state court administration in California, *Court News* notes many of the milestones and hurdles of the last year. See page 9.



Chief Justice  
Ronald M.  
George

#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE

## Securing Stable Funding for the Branch

*Leaders from the judiciary and the bar met in San Francisco on December 16 to discuss how to ensure stable and adequate funding for the judicial branch. Chief Justice Ronald M. George convened the Securing Stable Funding for Justice meeting. (See article on page 1.)*

*Following is an excerpt from his opening remarks.*

Over the last year we have been reminded just how delicately balanced our justice system is and how easily that balance can be upset. Significant reductions in court budgets have resulted in courtroom closures, staff layoffs, reduced hours of operation, and increased fees.

#### NEED FOR STABLE, ADEQUATE FUNDING

It could have been far worse. Fortunately, with the support of leaders of the bench and bar—many of whom are in this room today—we were able, working together, to reach agreements that enabled us to keep our courts open. It cannot be doubted that funding for the judicial branch remains unstable and uncertain. But on the positive side, I remain firmly convinced that the shift to state funding has been crucial to the stability we have achieved. Counties are confronting dramatic funding

systems, workers' compensation, and information technology. We also anticipate being able to provide comprehensive and timely information to assist policymakers and others in responding effectively.

#### FUNDING JUSTICE

Today the focus is on stable funding. Total expenditures for the judicial branch amount to about 2½ percent of total state spending, a tiny fraction of what the state spends on education, transportation, law enforcement, and the prison system.

All of those functions are vitally important to good government. Each has a vocal constituency that ensures that its message will be heard. But I submit that administering justice is no less important and in some ways is even more fundamental to the stability of our society.

It has been said that the courts are about giving individuals an alternative to raising their fists and striking out at others. An insistence on justice—and a forum for rendering justice—is the hallmark of a civilized society. The role of an independent, strong judiciary is not always well understood and too frequently is taken for granted. The constituency we must rely upon to speak for justice is represented here in this room—lawyers and judges, court administrators, and policymakers. We must ensure that the critical role played by the justice system does not get short shrift in the complex business of government.

#### PAY NOW OR PAY LATER

I believe we have a choice: pay now or pay later. Pay now to fund innovations that have been proven to work—drug courts, for example, and domestic violence and juvenile mental health courts—so that society can avoid paying the costs (even greater costs) later and so that the individuals involved do not return to the courts on our criminal dockets. If we do not pay now to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of judges and courtrooms to resolve contract disputes and other business matters in a timely fashion, we will pay later in the loss of revenues when businesses—finding that obtaining justice and resolving disputes is too costly or too slow—decide to move to other locations. Pay now to ensure that all individuals have meaningful access to the courts, or pay later in increased disrespect for the law and increasing social turmoil.

Not very long ago, it regularly took at least five years to get disputes before a judge or jury. Fast-track rules, requiring increased management by the judges, resolved the problem, and the vast majority of cases now

**The judicial branch's ability to provide essential services to the public should not ebb and flow with the capital gains revenue received by the state from the dot-com industry.**

shortfalls and already have been forced to close health clinics and libraries and reduce fire, police, and other vital services. Local courts and the services they provide undoubtedly would be on that list were it not for the change in the funding source for the courts. . . .

Nevertheless, there is reason to fear that we will be facing even more serious budget challenges in the coming year than in the past, given the dire financial situation facing the state. The need to find solutions that will keep our courts accessible to all who need their services has never been greater. To succeed, we must establish funding for the judicial system that will be adequate in good fiscal times and in bad. A strong and independent judicial system is not a luxury to be afforded only when the economy is strong; the judicial branch's ability to provide essential services to the public should not ebb and flow with the capital gains revenue received by the state from the dot-com industry. . . .

#### ADVOCATING FOR THE BRANCH

As today's sessions proceed, I believe it will become clear how fragile is the funding of California's justice system. We will need your assistance to communicate this reality to lawyers, judges, legislators, and other decision makers across the state, as well as to the public. We also need to demonstrate that the bar and the courts, working together, can make a difference in this endeavor. To be effective will take the efforts of all of us, working together.

As we proceed today, I encourage you to think broadly and creatively. We do not expect you to create or adopt a specific plan of action, but rather to place ideas on the table. It is indisputably true that we are facing a serious financial situation. But this also is true: a shortage of money is no excuse for a shortage of ideas. It is your ideas that we are after today.

#### STATEWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE

As you are all aware, three major reforms—state funding, unification, and the Facilities Act—have, in just a few short years, transformed California's judicial branch. We now truly have a statewide system of justice in which policy drives funding. We have reduced duplication and minimized conflicts in our operating systems. We have allocated and used resources where they are most needed. We have developed uniform rules of practice and procedure to eliminate disparities in different jurisdictions.

And there is more work to come: we are in the process of implementing a statewide infrastructure for the courts. This approach will help us reduce costs and engage in consistent management in areas such as fiscal

**The resources we are relying upon today are your expertise and creative thinking. We are not asking for money; we ask for your ideas.**

are heard within one year. But these gains are at risk. As continued budget reductions require courts to set priorities, criminal cases, by law, must take precedence. It may be only a matter of time before serious backlogs reappear in our civil courts.

Efforts to improve jury service, to provide enhanced tools for pro per litigants, to better assist families in need, and to allow courts to respond quickly and effectively to appropriate community needs also are at risk. . . .

#### COLLECTIVE EFFORT

The resources we are relying upon today are your expertise and creative thinking. We are not asking for money; we ask for your ideas. I intend to create a Commission to Secure Stable Funding for Justice, and some of you will be asked to serve. But all of you and your colleagues are integral to our efforts to bring greater visibility to the value of fair and consistent funding for California's judicial system.

Today's meeting is an historic effort to begin to deal with the difficult funding issues we face—not just next year or the year after but in the decades ahead. We expect no one-day miracle—no *Eureka!* moment at the end of this session. What we ask for today is your time; what we hope for in the future is your commitment to ensuring the strength and independence of the California judicial system. With those resources available to us, I am confident we shall succeed.

Take  
Note

For the full  
text of the  
Chief Justice's  
remarks at

the Securing Stable Funding for Justice meeting, visit the California Courts Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/speech121603.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/speech121603.htm).



Judicial Council Action

# New Operational Plan to Guide Judicial Branch

At its December 5 meeting in Los Angeles, the Judicial Council adopted a new three-year operational plan for the judicial branch. (See full story on page 1.)

The new plan, which took effect January 1, sets forth objectives to ensure:

- Stable and adequate funding for the judicial branch of government;
- Continued independence in judicial decision making;
- Modernization of court management and administration;

- Improved technology throughout the courts;
- Access and fairness for all members of the public; and
- Public trust and confidence in the courts.

OTHER ACTIONS

In other actions, the council:

**Distinguished Service Awards** Approved 7 recipients of the 2003 Judicial Council Distinguished Service Award for their significant contributions to court administration. (See story on page 8.)

**Kleps Awards** Approved 10 recipients of the 2003 Ralph N. Kleps Awards, which honor innovative contributions made by individual state courts to the administration of justice in California. (See story on page 15.)

**Public Access to Trial Court Budget Information** Adopted rule 6.620 of the California Rules of Court, which requires trial courts to seek input from the public before taking action on certain administrative and financial issues that are likely to have a significant impact on the public. The rule—required by statute—does not apply to the judicial or adjudicative functions of the trial courts or to the assignment of judges.

**Special Court Funds** Approved updated guidelines for the Trial Court Improvement

Fund and the Judicial Administration Efficiency and Modernization Fund.

**Jury Summons** Voted to encourage the use of a new model jury summons and a “Court and Community” information pamphlet, and endorsed their voluntary statewide implementation.

**Juvenile Court** Agreed to sponsor Assembly Bill 129. This bill sets forth the Legislature’s intent to enact provisions authorizing a county to create a dual-status protocol for children in juvenile court, allowing them to receive services as both dependents and wards of the court.

**Legislation** Voted to sponsor other legislative measures involving service and filing of motion papers and discovery; small claims; filing fees; and postretirement compensation for subordinate judicial officers. ■

# Governor Releases Proposed Budget

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on January 9 presented his proposed fiscal year 2004–2005 State Budget, calling for substantial cuts in all levels of government, including the judicial branch.

The Governor’s proposal calls for total state spending of \$99 billion, including approximately \$2.6 billion for the judicial branch. It includes an ongoing, unallocated reduction of \$9.8 million in the budget for the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and Administrative Office of the Courts. The ongoing, unallocated reduction proposed for the trial courts is \$59 million, but the actual operating impact could be significantly greater due to shortfalls in fee revenues and the unfunded costs of items such as security, salaries, county surcharges, and retirement benefits.

In the next several weeks, Chief Justice Ronald M. George and other judicial leaders will meet with Governor Schwarzenegger, members of his senior staff, and the Department of Finance to discuss implications of and concerns about the proposed budget. The budget ultimately will be reviewed by legislative fiscal committees, and a revised version is expected from the Governor in May.

● For more information on the judicial branch budget, visit <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/finance/latest.htm>, or e-mail [budgets@jud.ca.gov](mailto:budgets@jud.ca.gov).

# Supreme Court Amends Ethics Code for Judges

The California Supreme Court in December amended portions of the Code of Judicial Ethics that concern ownership of bonds, speech of judicial candidates, and sexual harassment.

OWNERSHIP OF BONDS

The court adopted canon 3E(4) to address whether ownership of a bond constitutes a financial interest for purposes of judicial disqualification. The new canon makes clear that ownership of a corporate bond valued in excess of \$1,500 is always disqualifying, whereas ownership of a government bond is disqualifying only if the outcome of the proceeding could substantially affect the value of the bond.

SPEECH OF JUDICIAL CANDIDATES

The court amended canon 5B(2) and added commentary to it to address the possible effect of *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White* (2002) 536 U.S. 765 on California’s limitations on campaign speech by candidates for judicial office.

In *White*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that a canon of judicial conduct that prohibited a judicial candidate from “announcing his or her views on disputed legal or political issues” violated the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The California Code of Judicial Ethics does not contain a provision with this same holding. As it stands, canon 5B states that judicial candidates shall not

“make statements to the electorate or the appointing authority that commit or appear to commit the candidate with respect to cases, controversies, or issues that could come before the courts.” The court’s changes to canon 5B clarify the position of the code on this issue; distinguish between this “commit clause” and “the ‘announce clause’ that was the subject of ... *White*”; and prohibit “making knowing misrepresentations, including false statements or misleading statements, during an election campaign.”

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The court amended canon 3B(5) and added canon 3C(5) to strengthen the prohibition against sexual harassment.

Canon 3B(5) requires a judge to perform judicial duties without bias or prejudice. Its statement that a judge should refrain from engaging “in speech, gestures, or other conduct that

would reasonably be perceived as sexual harassment” was moved from the commentary to the body of the canon. New canon 3C(5) expressly prohibits the same conduct by a judge in his or her performance of administrative duties.

The Supreme Court’s Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics—chaired by then-Administrative Presiding Justice Charles S. Vogel of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District—proposed the recent amendments after circulating drafts of them for public comment. The committee reviews issues referred to it by the court and makes recommendations concerning whether the Code of Judicial Ethics should be amended.

- To view the entire Code of Judicial Ethics, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/rules/appendix/appdiv2.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/rules/appendix/appdiv2.pdf). ■
- To view the curriculum package developed for the Supreme Court’s special oral argument session, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/6thDistrict/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/6thDistrict/). ■

# San Jose Students See Supreme Court in Action

The California Supreme Court traveled to San Jose in December for a special oral argument session that was one of the largest collaborative public education events in state court history.

Approximately 500 high school and law students attended the session—held December 2–3 at the Superior Court of Santa Clara County—and had an opportunity to ask questions of the justices. Countless more viewed a broadcast of the session at their schools, aided by a curriculum package developed by the Sixth District of the Court of Appeal and the Santa Clara County Office of Education.

The first three cases of the oral argument and the question-and-answer session between the justices and high school students were broadcast live on the California Channel, a cable network serving 5.6 million viewers. The network offered a satellite link

to facilitate coverage by local stations.

The three cases heard and televised during the special session involved a variety of legal issues, including the constitutional protections for conduct motivated by religious beliefs (*Catholic Charities v. Superior Court of County of Sacramento*, S099822), paternity rights involving a presumed father and a nonbiological father in a dependency proceeding (*In re Jesusa V.*, S106843), and insurance coverage issues stemming from a jewelry theft (*E.M.M.I. Inc. v. Zurich American*, S109609).

**COLLABORATIVE EFFORT** Building on special oral argument sessions held in Orange County in 2001 and in Fresno in 2002 (see story on Kleps award winners on page 15), the high court session in San Jose was a collaborative effort of the Sixth District of the Court of Appeal;

the Superior Courts of Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz Counties; public and private high schools; law schools; and local bar associations.

The Sixth District of the Court of Appeal and the Santa Clara County Office of Education developed a curriculum package for high school teachers containing information on some of the legal issues that the high court considered during the session. The curriculum was distributed to schools throughout the four counties in the Sixth Appellate District—Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara.

Justice Patricia Bamattre-Manoukian of the Court of Appeal, Sixth Appellate District, chaired the committee that planned the public outreach campaign surrounding the Supreme Court’s special session. The committee included representatives of the Supreme Court and the bench and bar in the district’s four counties. Members included Frederick K. Ohlrich, Clerk of the Supreme Court; superior court presiding judges, assistant presiding judges, and

court executive officers from the district’s four counties; presidents and executive directors of county bar associations; and staff from the Court of Appeal.

● To view the curriculum package developed for the Supreme Court’s special oral argument session, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/6thDistrict/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/6thDistrict/). ■



The California Supreme Court traveled to San Jose December 2–3 for a special oral argument session with questions from high school students. The session was one of the largest collaborative public education events in state court history. The first three cases were broadcast live on the California Channel. Photo: Todd Rogers



## In the News

# Court Promotes Online Jury Info

A recent newspaper article highlighted how one court is using the Internet to make fulfillment of jury service easier.

The story, "County Web Site Lets Jurors Check Status Online," appeared in the December 1 edition of the *Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa). It described how prospective jurors can use the court's Web site ([www.sonomasuperiorcourt.com/jury/](http://www.sonomasuperiorcourt.com/jury/)) to get general information on jury service, determine whether they need to report for duty or can request a postponement, and find out where to appear. In addition to describing the site, the story mentions that most trials take less than a week and that, with the court's one-day or one-trial system, a potential juror who is not selected on his or her first day of service has fulfilled the jury obligation for one year.

The story helped to raise awareness about the court's new juror Web site and the one-day or one-trial jury system, and made jury service less burdensome for county residents.

Other courts in the news:

**'S.J. County Launches Informational Court Videos,'** *News-Sentinel* (Lodi), November 27, 2003; **'Court Video Outlines Rights for Offenders,'** *Tracy Press*, November 27, 2003

Announced the availability of new informational videos produced by the Superior Court of San Joaquin County to increase the public's awareness and knowledge of the legal process.

**'Magnet School Attracts a Real Court Session,'** *Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 2003

Described the oral argument held by Division Eight of the Second Appellate District for the law and public service magnet program at Dorsey High School, to educate students on the court system.

**'Courthouse Wait Room Thrives,'** *Press Telegram* (Long Beach), November 20, 2003

Told the story of the successful children's waiting room at the Long Beach courthouse, where nearly 4,700 children were entertained in a little more than one year.

**'Executive Settles In to Court Job,'** *Davis Enterprise*, November 10, 2003

Introduced readers to the Yolo County court's new executive officer, James Perry.

**'New Court Brochures Made by County,'** *Siskiyou Daily News* (Yreka), November 4, 2003

Announced the availability of new brochures from the Superior Court of Siskiyou County that describe court procedures and reflect the community the court serves. (See story on Kleps award recipients on page 15.)

**'Program Helps Resolve 360 Cases in 10 Days,'** *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, November 4; **'Lawyers Help Clear Backlog in L.A. Courts,'** *Daily News* (Woodland Hills), October 21, 2003; **'Volunteers Will Tackle Case Backlog in Van Nuys Court,'** *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 2003

Announced a settlement program that opened up 11 courtrooms in Van Nuys and that uses nearly 300 volunteer lawyers in attempting to settle hundreds of civil lawsuits.

**'Legal Self-Help Site Holds Grand Opening,'** *San Mateo County Times*, October 24, 2003

Announced the opening of the Superior Court of San Mateo County's new self-help center, which assists litigants in filling out forms and offers information on representing oneself in civil matters.

**'Court Finds It's All Laci, All the Time,'** *Daily Journal* (San Francisco), October 23, 2003

Reported that the Superior Court of Stanislaus County was receiving high marks from the press on its handling of *People v. Peterson* and the corresponding deluge of interest in the case.

**'Teachers Learn in Courtroom,'** *Desert Sun* (Palm Springs), October 20, 2003

Featured the Superior Court of Riverside County's Teach the Teachers Program, which brings teachers into the courtroom to gain first-hand knowledge of the legal system.

**'A Love of the Law,'** *Visalia Times-Delta*, October 18, 2003

Featured an interview with Superior Court of Tulare County Presiding Judge Paul Anthony Vortmann on the subjects of court facilities and management and the need to demystify the court system.



A recent article in the *Press Democrat* (Santa Rosa) described how prospective jurors can go to the court's new Web site to determine whether they need to report for duty or can request a postponement. The site, located at [www.sonomasuperiorcourt.com/jury/](http://www.sonomasuperiorcourt.com/jury/), also provides general information on jury service and where to appear.

**'Drug Court Gives Program Graduates a Clean Slate,'** *Santa Maria Times*, October 17, 2003

Reported on the graduation ceremony of Santa Barbara County's Substance Abuse Treatment Court, in which nonviolent drug offenders have their charges dismissed in exchange for spending 18 months in supervised treatment.

**'Taft Court Future Is in State Report,'** *Daily Midway Driller* (Taft), October 17, 2003

Representatives from the Superior Court of Kern County commented on the statewide court facilities plan that will determine when new construction or renovation projects will begin, including any work on the courthouse in Taft.

**'Art for People's Sake,'** *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 17, 2003; **'Family Law Center Reaches Out Through Art,'** *Contra Costa Times* (Walnut Creek), October 9, 2003

Described the Superior Court of Contra Costa County's Art in the Courthouse project, in which works from local artists are displayed on the walls of the Peter L. Spinetta Family Law Center in Martinez.

**'Ceremony Hails Opening of Long-Awaited Facility,'** *Daily News* (Woodland Hills), October 17, 2003; **'Courthouse Does Justice to North County,'** *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 2003; **'Just Enough Room at New Courthouse,'** *Antelope Valley Press* (Palmdale), October 10, 2003; **'Order in the Court,'** *Daily News* (Woodland Hills), October 10, 2003; **'Dates Set for County Courthouse Opening,'** *Antelope Valley Press* (Palmdale), August 27, 2003

Announced the opening of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's new courthouse in Lancaster, which will accommodate the area's population growth.

**'Court Hires Debt Agency to Collect Unpaid Fines,'** *Sacramento Bee*, October 16, 2003

Reported that the Superior Court of Sacramento County hired a private collection agency to help it collect unpaid court fines.

**'Jury Duty Has Some Honored, Others Angry'** and **'Questions Abound for Potential Jurors,'** *Napa Valley Register*, October 12, 2003

Representatives of the Superior Court of Napa County commented on the jury system and how the court is trying to improve the experience for potential jurors.

**'Courthouse on the Move,'** *Daily News* (Woodland Hills), October 7, 2003; **'Five Civil Courts Ready to Move,'** *Antelope Valley Press* (Palmdale), October 7, 2003

Reported that operations at the Palmdale courthouse will shift to the new courthouse in Lancaster, saving Los Angeles County \$500,000 per year in expenses and operating costs.

**'Judges Solicit Ideas to Improve Courts,'** *San Mateo County Times* (San Mateo), October 7, 2003

Featured a program of the Superior Court of San Mateo County in which its judges visit law firms and invite their suggestions for improving the court system.

**'Global Justice,'** *Los Angeles Business Journal*, October 6, 2003

Reported Superior Court of Los Angeles County Judge Judith C. Chirlin's selection by the American Bar Association to represent it in the International Legal Assistance Consortium, which helps set up judicial systems in countries previously under authoritarian regimes. ■



## HR Update

## New HR Systems, Services

Here's an update on some of the many statewide human resources initiatives in the judicial branch.

**ENHANCED INTERPRETER TRACKING SYSTEM**

An enhanced version of the Court Interpreters Data Collection System (CIDCS) is helping the state judicial branch track interpreter use and comply with the Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act (Sen. Bill 371) and other laws.

The CIDCS assists the superior courts in tracking and retrieving information on court interpreters, including current contact information, cases interpreted, and updates on registration and compliance status. In addition, through the system the branch can perform analyses and make reports on statewide interpreter usage that are required by the Legislature.

The database is accessible from a secure location on the Serranus Web site.

● For more information, contact J. M. Muñoz, Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC) Court Interpreters Program Unit, 415-865-7627; e-mail: josemanuel.munoz@jud.ca.gov.

**NEW HR UNIT DEVOTED TO JUSTICES, JUDGES**

The AOC's Human Resources Division created the new Judicial Services Unit to provide justices and judges throughout the state with answers to their questions about judicial compensation, benefits, retirement, insurance, disability, education, and other important issues.

The new unit will use site visits, focus groups, and surveys to assess the needs of the state's justices and judges and determine the order in which to address them. Unit team members also will work with court staff who have responsibility for supporting justices and judges.

A toll-free telephone number will serve as a centralized information resource and help desk. In addition, the unit will provide the latest human resources information and materials through a section of the Serranus Web site reserved for justices and judges.

● For more information, contact Andy Hauer, AOC's Judicial Services Unit, 415-865-4256; e-mail: andy.hauer@jud.ca.gov.

**REGIONAL LABOR RELATIONS FORUMS**

The AOC is kicking off the 2004 Regional Labor Relations Forums, which give superior courts opportunities—mostly by teleconference—to share promising practices and discuss timely issues related to labor and employee relations.

Anticipated topics of discussion for the quarterly forums include health and welfare benefits plans, court interpreters, workers' compensation, negotiated salary increases, and employment law updates. The forums will take place in January, April, July, and October.

● For more information or for forum dates, contact Cynthia Passon, AOC's Human Resources Division, 415-865-4277; e-mail: cynthia.passon@jud.ca.gov.

**LABOR RELATIONS ACADEMY**

The 2004 Labor Relations Academy is scheduled for the first week of March in Burbank and for the second week of March in Sacramento.

The academy, sponsored by the AOC's Human Resources Division, provides an in-depth overview of labor relations for superior court staff members

from across the state who are responsible for negotiations with recognized employee unions. Based on feedback from attendees at the last academy, it will feature mock negotiation sessions, in which participants will act out the roles of union and management representatives, using information they gain at the academy. The faculty will include AOC staff as well as experts from the courts.

● For more information, contact Linda Ashcraft, AOC's Human Resources Division, 415-865-4287; e-mail: linda.ashcraft@jud.ca.gov. ■

**Humboldt Court Staff Gets the Message**

When public demonstrations target a court or when emergency situations arise, employees have work-related concerns and questions about their personal safety. The 76 employees of the Superior Court of Humboldt County can call an emergency telephone line to get the information they need.

"Employees can arrive at our parking lot one morning and see protesters surrounding the building," says court Executive Officer Dwight W. Clark. "They wonder things like: What should I do? Should I go in? What door should I use? Will my car be damaged? Will I be hurt?"

In Humboldt County the court is a primary tenant in a county building. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as well as several significant threats, county officials considered closing the court at lunchtime for security reasons. This raised some additional concerns for court employees, such as whether they would be able to get back in if they exited the building.

Mr. Clark listened to the concerns of his employees and discussed the issue with his court managers. Together they developed an idea for a telephone line

modeled on the juror instruction line, with a base message that can be altered or added to in segments. They established an emergency phone number that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Managers can update the message at any time from any location.

According to court Human Resources Manager Becky Janus, the cost to implement the system was minimal. "We used our existing equipment and main switch number. It took some time to create the instruction list—we tested several versions. Then we printed the instructions on paper, laminated them, cut them to wallet size, and distributed them to employees with their paychecks," said Ms. Janus.

The court's human resources staff trained the managers in recording and deleting messages and sent a broadcast voicemail announcement that the program was in effect. In addition, a laminated half-page card was given to employees to put in their phone books at home.

● For more information, contact Becky Janus, Superior Court of Humboldt County, 707-269-1202; e-mail: rjanus@humboldtcourt.ca.gov.

## Consulate Staffs Introduced to State Court System

JUDGE RITA J. MILLER  
SUPERIOR COURT OF LOS  
ANGELES COUNTY

Thirty-nine staff members of foreign consulates in Los Angeles County received first-hand instruction on the legal system at the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's first-ever Court-Consular Corps Conference on November 13. Together the attendees represented 36 countries.

"We saw it as a way to leverage the dissemination of information," says Judge Richard L. Fruin, chair of the court's Community Outreach Committee, which organized the conference in coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Protocol. "Thousands of foreign nationals residing in the county rely upon

their local consulates when they have contact with the legal system. If we can get accurate information about court procedures into the hands of the consuls, they can assist their constituents more effectively."

The program—which took place at the Stanley Mosk and Clara Shortridge Foltz Courthouses in Los Angeles—opened with remarks from Presiding Judge Robert A. Dukes. Judicial officers then gave short talks on a wide variety of topics on which U.S. residents might seek information from the consulates. Speakers discussed issues of fairness and access, the availability of translators, employment law, and traffic laws and the impact of violations on immigrants. On family law issues, presenters

explained the functions of dependency, juvenile and family law courts, restraining orders, and child custody orders.

Two short videos were presented, followed by a tour of the criminal court's lock-up and arraignment facilities. Judges from the criminal courts discussed the anatomy of a criminal proceeding, including arraignment, bail, appointment of counsel, suppression motions, preliminary hearings, drug courts, plea bargaining, trial, and sentencing.

The program received excellent reviews. "Any chance to learn more is very welcome," says Croatian Consul Damir Tomka. "This is the best place to learn—from the mouths of the experts. To do so in one place, in one day, it's fantastic."

The court plans to repeat the program annually. In addition, its Community Outreach Committee hosts similar programs for teachers and clergy throughout the year. The court hopes to use these "middleman audiences" to reach thousands of people in need of information about the courts and justice system.

● For more information, contact Camilo Cruz, Community Relations, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, 213-974-5178; e-mail: ccruz@lasuperiorcourt.org. ■



Commissioner Martha Bellinger explained the role of juvenile delinquency courts to consulate staff from around Los Angeles County. The presentation was part of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's Court-Consular Corps Conference, which introduced participants to the courts and the legal system. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County*



### Update From AOC Regional Offices

## Security, Collections Working Groups Lead Regional Offices' Activities



Michael M. Roddy  
Director,  
Northern/Central  
Region

*The three regional offices of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) enable the Judicial Council, the AOC, and the courts to work more effectively as partners in addressing local needs and fulfilling new state-level responsibilities. Following is an update on recent activities of the regional offices, which are located in Burbank, Sacramento, and San Francisco.*

#### COURT SECURITY

A working group on court security convened for the first time on January 16 at the Northern/Central Regional Office in Sacramento.

During its 2003 session, the Legislature expressed concern about the recent increase in court security expenditures and sought a way to establish security service standards. The result was a half-year reduction of \$11 million in court security funding in the fiscal year 2003-2004 judicial branch budget (the 2004-2005 reduction will be \$22 million) to reflect anticipated savings from the adoption of uniform standards.

To facilitate the development and implementation of the standards, legislation was passed requiring the Judicial Council to establish a working group on court security comprising representatives from the judicial branch, counties, sheriffs' departments, and law enforcement labor organizations. The Working Group on Court Security will develop, for the council's consideration and action, recommendations on:

- Subject areas to be addressed in court security plans;
- Uniform standards and guidelines that may be used by the Judicial Council and any sheriff or marshal to implement trial court security services; and
- Policy directions for achieving efficiencies that reduce court security operating costs.

• For more information, contact Michael M. Roddy, Director, AOC's Northern/Central Regional Office, 916-263-1333; e-mail: mike.rodny@jud.ca.gov.

#### CALIFORNIA CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The California Case Management System (CCMS) project has made significant progress during the past few months. Extensive testing by multiple courts will begin in January at the new AOC Technology Center in Alameda. Initial deployment of the criminal and traffic system is planned for the Superior Courts of Orange and Alameda Counties by June, with deployments for the Superior Courts of San Diego, San Luis Obispo, and Contra Costa Counties by the end of 2004.

The AOC recently signed a contract with Deloitte Consulting to develop the civil, small claims, and probate case management system over the next two years. The project, which began in January, will produce a flexible and scalable system that will operate in all courts in the state.

Seven superior courts—those in Contra Costa, Fresno, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, and Shasta Counties—are participating in the project as "sponsor" courts, sharing their resources and expertise and supplying broad, statewide representation to the project.

• For more information, contact Sheila Gonzalez, Director, AOC's Southern Regional Office, 818-558-3020; e-mail: sheila.gonzalez@jud.ca.gov.

#### COURT COLLECTIONS PROGRAMS

A working group that was created to improve the judicial branch's collection of court fees and penalties met for the first time on November 14 in San Francisco.

Following the passage and signing of Senate Bill 940 in September, the Judicial Council and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) appointed 20 members—representing courts, counties, and state agencies—to the Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections. The working group is charged with making recommendations to the council on guidelines for a comprehensive statewide court collections program.

During its initial meeting, working group members volunteered to chair or participate in subcommittees and submitted the names of individuals from their respective organizations to participate in subcommittee work. The subcommittees have begun

their work and are sending weekly updates to the Southern Regional Office. The subcommittees will officially report back to the working group with their findings in March.

• For more information, contact Sheila Gonzalez, Director, AOC's Southern Regional Office, 818-558-3020; e-mail: sheila.gonzalez@jud.ca.gov.

#### AOC STAFF TRAINING IN THE TRIAL COURTS

A group of AOC employees in January took part in the AOC Training in the Courts program, which enables participants to observe and participate in the nuts and bolts of daily trial court operations. The Superior Courts of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Napa Counties each welcomed a team of two AOC staff members.

In the program's week-long sessions, key court management staff provide AOC employees with first-hand information on caseload, time requirements, public contact issues, judicial process, interdependency with justice system partners, and other operational issues. The program, which debuted in March 2003, is aimed at giving AOC staff an appreciation of the operational and administrative responsibilities in trial courts and fostering collaboration between the AOC and trial court staffs.

To date, 12 AOC employees have participated in the program. Additional sessions in 2004 are planned for trial courts in the Bay Area/Northern Coastal, Southern, and Northern/Central Regions.

• For more information, contact Jeanne Caughell, AOC's Bay Area/Northern Coastal Regional Office, 415-865-7586; e-mail: jeanne.caughell@jud.ca.gov. ■



Sheila Gonzalez  
Director,  
Southern Region



Christine Patton  
Director, Bay  
Area/Northern  
Coastal Region

### Bench-Bar Meeting

*Continued from page 1*

greater uniformity in court fees, ease administrative burdens, address concerns about access to justice, and secure the revenues that were projected in the fiscal year 2003-2004 budget.

• For more information on the Securing Stable Funding for Justice meeting, contact Kathleen Howard, AOC's Office of Governmental Affairs, 916-323-3121; e-mail: kathleen.howard@jud.ca.gov. ■



Judicial and bar leaders at the Securing Stable Funding for Justice meeting were organized into discussion groups to focus on three issues: planning for the soon-to-be-appointed Commission to Secure Stable Funding for Justice, advocating for the branch, and ensuring public access to the courts.

### Planning

*Continued from page 1*

trends and priorities reported in the 58 trial courts' individual operational plans.

These efforts culminated on July 17-18 at the council's annual planning meeting. The meeting featured facilitated panel discussions, plenary sessions, and breakout workshops that were aimed at helping the council reach consensus on branch priorities and objectives and the means for achieving them. It was moderated by William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts; Justice Richard D. Huffman, Chair of the Executive and Planning Committee; and Clark Kelso, Professor at McGeorge School of Law.

#### NEXT STEPS

The new operational plan describes objectives that are linked to the six goals of the council's overall strategic plan. The objectives gave rise to 52 specific "desired outcomes" to be achieved by June 2006.

*Continued on page 7*







Justice Carol A. Corrigan  
Court of Appeal,  
First Appellate  
District



Justice James D. Ward  
Court of Appeal,  
Fourth Appellate  
District



Judge Leonard P. Edwards  
Superior Court of  
Santa Clara  
County



Jeanne Millsaps  
Superior Court of  
San Joaquin  
County



Christine Hansen  
Administrative  
Office of the  
Courts



James Herman  
State Bar of  
California



Governor George Deukmejian

## Council Announces Distinguished Service Award Recipients

Two appellate court justices, a family and juvenile court judge, a court executive officer, an Administrative Office of the Courts director, a former State Bar president, and a former Governor were honored with 2003 Distinguished Service Awards, the highest Judicial Council honor for those who demonstrate extraordinary leadership and make significant contributions to the administration of justice in California.

The Judicial Council announced the award recipients at its December 5 meeting. Chief Justice Ronald M. George will present the awards—now in their 11th year—during the 2004 California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC), which takes place February 25–26 in San Francisco.

The recipients of the 2003 Distinguished Service Awards follow.

### JURIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Justice Carol A. Corrigan** of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, and **Justice James D. Ward** of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, were selected jointly for their work on the council's Task Force on Jury Instructions. Since 1997 Justice Corrigan has chaired the task force while Justice Ward has served as the task force's vice-chair and chaired its civil subcommittee.

Both justices were instrumental in the drafting of the task force's plain-language civil jury instructions, which were published last fall—the most extensive revision of jury instructions ever attempted in the United States. Plain-language criminal instructions are in preparation and will be out in approximately a year.

The justices' commitment to the more-than-six-year project has been unwavering, and their dedication has continued through the promotion of the new instructions. They have spent countless hours on the project, as well as presented seminars to bar associations and other interested organizations.

The new plain-language jury instructions have been recognized both in California and nationally. The State Bar of California presented an award to Chief Justice Ronald M. George honoring the work of the task force and passed a resolution endorsing the use of the new instructions. In addition, the Burton Foundation in Washington, D.C., gave the task force the Burton Award for Outstanding Reform, a national award for clear legal writing.

**Judge Leonard P. Edwards** of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County was selected for his

innovative and lasting contributions to the judiciary in the areas of juvenile and family courts, court coordination, and domestic violence prevention and intervention.

In his own county, Judge Edwards helped create one of the first unified family courts in the state and has led the juvenile dependency court to its stature as a national model. He also started one of the nation's first dependency drug treatment courts. This court works with parents who have lost their children to the child welfare system.

Judge Edwards was selected for his many other activities as well, such as his service on countless committees and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of juveniles and families. He founded the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Council, served on the Judicial Council and its Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, chaired the Juvenile Court Judges of California, and led the Child Victim Witness Project, among many other accomplishments. Judge Edwards is a noted writer whose works have affected the legal system and been used as curricula in many universities and law schools.

### JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION AWARD

**Jeanne Millsaps**, formerly executive officer of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County, was selected for her more than 30-year commitment to improving judicial administration and her ability to balance the local interests of her court with broader objectives of the judicial branch.

In her own court Ms. Millsaps led the development of the Court-Community Leadership and Liaison Program, which provides minority and disabled communities with representatives who can give them information about the court. Her support led to the creation of *In the Interest of Justice*, a cultural awareness video that educates the bench and court staffs on Southeast Asian cultures and how traditional behaviors can be misinterpreted in the courtroom. She also has been instrumental in implementing a highly successful jury compliance program and in developing a system that allows litigants to file small claims cases over the Internet.

In addition, Ms. Millsaps has given time and energy to projects outside her court that strive to improve the legal system. In San Joaquin County she is active in advocacy groups working on criminal justice issues, such as the Youth Policy Council, the Criminal Justice System Operations Group, and the Domestic Violence Task Force. At the state level, she has been involved with numerous committees and task

forces, including the Governor's Task Force on Family Support and many of the Judicial Council's advisory committees, such as the Court Executives Advisory Committee, Coordination Committee, Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, Family Grants Committee, Security Budget Committee, Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee, and Reporting of the Record Task Force.

**Christine Hansen**, Director of the Finance Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), was selected for her leadership in the role of chief financial officer for the California judicial branch.

Ms. Hansen's finance expertise has been a key to meeting the needs of the branch during the state's budget challenges. She has taken a lead role in confronting these challenges by working closely with the Governor's Office, Legislature, and Department of Finance. Along with other judicial leaders, she has been instrumental in minimizing significant budget reductions and securing new funding for the courts so that they can maintain their core services to the public. She also has taken a leadership role in the Trial Court Executive Management Budget Working Group and the Judicial Branch Budget Advisory Committee, two groups that are developing solutions for the financial burdens facing the courts.

In addition, Ms. Hansen was recognized for her work to improve the statewide fiscal infrastructure of the judicial branch. She has led efforts to establish a new statewide budget development process, a financial policies and procedures manual for trial courts, an internal audit program, and a statewide court accounting and reporting system. She has made significant strides in increasing communication on finance-related matters among the AOC, the courts, and the other two sister branches of government.

### BERNARD E. WITKIN AWARD

**James Herman**, president of the State Bar in 2002–2003, was selected in recognition of his leadership of the bar's unprecedented effort to generate support for the independence of the judiciary and for adequate funding for the state's judicial branch.

Working closely with judicial branch leaders, Mr. Herman spearheaded a massive campaign to educate state officials, lawyers, the public, and ultimately the Legislature on the impacts of proposed budget cuts on the courts. He directed letters to the state's attorneys and encouraged them to forward the letters on to their clients in order to have

both groups convey to their legislators and locally elected officials the effects budget cutbacks would have on the court system. The letters sought real examples of how litigants would be or were being affected by budget cutbacks in their local courts.

Devoting time and energy far beyond the already enormous commitment demanded of presidents of the State Bar, Mr. Herman sponsored numerous forums on the budget and embarked on an exhaustive speaking tour of the state. His and the bar's outreach efforts were an effective way of spreading the judiciary's message on access to justice and the consequences of the judicial branch budget, and helped secure essential popular support for the budget compromise that ultimately was approved by the Legislature.

**Governor George Deukmejian** was selected for his many contributions to the judicial branch in California during his service to the state as Assembly member (1963–1967), Senator (1967–1979), Attorney General (1979–1983), and Governor (1983–1991).

During his tenure in the Legislature, Governor Deukmejian authored or sponsored more than 30 bills related to courts and the judicial system, including those pertaining to the Youth Authority, appointment of judges, and bail. As Attorney General he drafted 513 opinions, many on court-related subjects, including judges' retirement benefits, judicial discipline, division of judicial districts, and filling of judicial vacancies.

While serving as California's 35th governor, Deukmejian signed Senate Bill 241 into law. Entitled the Willie L. Brown, Jr.–Bill Lockyer Civil Liability Reform Act of 1987, the bill improved varied aspects of the California tort system and had a national impact. Showing his concern for access to justice, Governor Deukmejian spoke out against limitations on access to the courts. In addition, he signed the Trial Court Delay Reduction Act of 1986, approved legislation creating the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in California, and appointed more than 1,000 trial judges and 8 Supreme Court justices. ■



# 2003: The Year That Was

Fires, earthquakes, recalls. The judicial branch was affected by all of the major stories in California in 2003, but no event had a greater impact on the courts than the state budget crisis. Many courts around the state were forced to close courthouses, cut hours, furlough staff, and reduce services to the public. But the branch also made positive strides: improving self-advocacy and communication with the Governor and the Legislature to limit the reductions to its budget; setting guidelines toward uniform access for the public to all state courts; and working with the State Bar and other justice stakeholders toward ensuring stable and adequate funding for the courts.

The year also ushered in many initiatives to improve the California court system. The judicial branch continued to prepare for the transfer of court facilities from the counties to the state. The courts made great strides in developing statewide financial and case management systems and provided more services, such as workers' compensation and health-care benefits, directly to their employees. In accordance with the Trial

Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act (Sen. Bill 371), courts began offering employment to eligible court interpreters. The Judicial Council adopted plain-language civil jury instructions, introduced a new Spanish-language online self-help center, and sponsored successful pilot projects in the areas of family law information centers, complex litigation, and drug courts. Topping off the year, in December the courts celebrated the 100th anniversary of juvenile courts in California.

For this annual chronology of state court administration, *Court News* consulted official and unofficial sources: court staff members, news releases, regional press, the legal dailies, memoranda, Web reports, calendars, and (of course) our own reporting during the year. While the resulting timeline is far from comprehensive, it provides an insightful look at the old year as we embrace the new.

We welcome additions to this overview, as well as contributions to the 2004 overview. Send your comments to [courtnews@jud.ca.gov](mailto:courtnews@jud.ca.gov).

## January

1

◆ The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) releases the second edition of the California Courts Online Self-Help Center, featuring plain English instructions and easy navigation.

◆ Courts statewide implement new rules of court affecting minimum standards for appointed counsel in capital cases, ethics standards for neutral arbitrators in contractual arbitration, and responsibilities of subordinate judicial officers.

◆ Four superior courts migrate from their county services to the Benefits Program for the Superior Courts of California, established by the AOC for trial court employees.

◆ New plain-language domestic violence and adoption forms are implemented at courts statewide.

◆ Through the first-of-its-kind Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program (developed by the AOC), seven superior courts begin providing workers' compensation coverage for their employees.

2

◆ The Superior Court of Los Angeles County's Family Law Services Department joins with Reading Is Fundamental of Southern California to distribute books to children at courthouses.

10

◆ Governor Gray Davis releases proposed midyear spending reductions for fiscal year 2002–2003 and his proposed budget for 2003–2004, calling for substantial cuts in the judicial branch budget. In response, the AOC's regional offices host a series of meetings of AOC directors, presiding judges, and court executive officers to review budget strategies.

◆ The Senate Bill 371 Administrative Working Group meets for a strategic planning session on the implementation of the Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act.

14

◆ AOC-TV, the California courts' satellite network, presents a live broadcast to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

16

◆ The Judicial Council approves a one-time \$255,000 grant to assist superior courts in developing and implementing community-focused action plans and programs to serve self-represented litigants.

21

◆ The Superior Court of Riverside County officially opens its Southwest Justice Center in Murrieta—the first courthouse in the county to use an electronic docket.

◆ The Judicial Council and its Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee award the second installment of a grant of more than \$1.2 million for California collaborative justice courts.

27

◆ The California Supreme Court launches an online application process for counsel wanting to apply for appointment to death penalty appeals or related habeas corpus and executive clemency proceedings.

31

◆ Nearly 75 percent of retired jurists in the Assigned Judges Program opt to remain in the program by certifying their compliance with a new policy that prohibits them from engaging in private dispute resolution activities for compensation.

## February

1

◆ The Superior Court of Ventura County begins construction on a new 56,000-square-foot juvenile courthouse, part of a 45-acre Juvenile Justice Complex that will also include detention and commitment facilities.

4

◆ Nearly all California trial courts submit budget reduction plans to shape the impacts of further cuts to their budgets this year as well as the cuts anticipated for fiscal year 2003–2004. The content is used to educate legislators, executive branch agencies, and the Legislative Analyst's Office on the effects that proposed budget reductions could have on the courts.

20

◆ Family law facilitators from throughout the state come together in San Francisco to update their skills at a training sponsored by the AOC.

21

◆ After initiating a pilot program in Stanislaus County, the judicial branch announces a five-year schedule for implementing a statewide electronic financial system in the courts.

25

◆ Judicial leaders from throughout the state convene in San Francisco for the 2003 California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC). With the theme "Judicial Branch Governance in Critical Times: Challenges and Opportunities," the conference facilitates a dialogue about the challenges facing the judiciary and how court leaders can work together to become a more cohesive branch of government.

◆ The Judicial Council's Judicial Services Advisory Committee meets for the first time. The committee will study and make recommendations for improving judicial service, compensation, and ways to attract and retain the best-qualified judges.

26

◆ The AOC publishes the first official history of court administration in this state—*Committed to Justice: The Rise of Judicial Administration in California*.

◆ Chief Justice Ronald M. George signs a resolution on behalf of the Judicial Council and the California judiciary commemorating the 100th anniversary of juvenile courts in California.

27

◆ Superior Court of Alameda County Judge Ken M. Kawaichi receives the Benjamin Aranda III Access to Justice Award at CJAC in San Francisco.

28

◆ At its business meeting, the Judicial Council approves a series of recommendations designed to address the fiscal challenges facing the judicial branch; approves a recommendation to provide more detailed trial court budget information; adopts rules of court establishing the Regional Employment Relations Committees and cross-assignment procedures to implement the Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act; reasserts its previous directive to the AOC to develop and implement the necessary statewide administrative infrastructure to support trial court operations, including a statewide judicial branch financial system, case management system, and technology center; approves the development of a statewide plan to create family law information centers in trial courts; and approves a proposal

from the Community-Focused Court Planning Implementation Committee to provide ongoing funding, leadership, and guidance for court planning, outreach, and education.

## March

1

◆ The AOC's Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) releases a study evaluating three pilot family law information centers, concluding that they help expedite pro per cases and that litigants are overwhelmingly satisfied with their services.

◆ CFCC releases a report to the Legislature on the Child Access to Visitation Grant Program, which awards grants to support noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. Although programs are available in 36 California counties, the report concludes that federal funds have been insufficient to meet the demand.

4

◆ The AOC signs a contract with Siemens Business Systems to establish the Judicial Branch Technology Center in Newark, California.

10

◆ The Superior Court of San Francisco County opens a multilingual self-help center, ACCESS, that offers assistance for litigants in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

◆ The AOC Staff Training in the Courts program debuts, with four members of the AOC's Executive Office Programs Division working for a week in the San Mateo and Alameda County courts.



◆ The AOC launches the Labor Relations Academy, a three-day training program for chief negotiators, contract administrators, and other court staff involved in collective bargaining and labor relations.

## 13

◆ The AOC and the California State Association of Counties host the first of three regional informational briefings on the Trial Court Facilities Act.

◆ To help meet the needs of the growing senior population, the Superior Court of Alameda County holds a symposium on addressing issues of court access for elders.

## 18

◆ The Society of Professional Journalists, Northern California Chapter, honors Chief Justice Ronald M. George with its Norwin S. Yoffie Career Achievement Award for his longtime efforts to make the California court system, court records, and the Judicial Council more accessible to the public.

◆ The AOC's Education Division/Center for Judicial Education and Research holds the Family and Juvenile Law Institutes in Los Angeles.

## 20

◆ CFCC's 17th annual Family Dispute Resolution Statewide Educational Institute takes place in Los Angeles.

## 25

◆ In his annual State of the Judiciary address, Chief Justice George tells a joint session of the California Legislature that landmark reforms have increased access to the courts, but budget reductions threaten to reduce services to the public.

◆ The Senate Budget Committee meets to hear the latest budget proposal, which calls for further reductions in state spending. Judicial leaders tell the committee that any further cuts to the judicial branch budget will likely fall hardest on civil and family law departments.

◆ The council releases its 2003 *Annual Report*, which summarizes the judicial branch's achievements during 2002, budgetary challenges, reforms, and key trends in court case-loads and workloads.

## 28

◆ The AOC's Education Division introduces an innovative leadership training program for senior and midlevel managers in the courts.

◆ The Superior Courts of Lake, Madera, Modoc, and San Benito Counties complete their migration to the Sustain case management system hosted at the State Data Center in Sacramento.

## April

### 1

◆ As required by Senate Bill 1732, the judicial branch begins assessing the seismic performance of court buildings in preparation for the transfer of facilities from the county to the state.

### 8

◆ AOC-TV presents a live California Courts News (CCN) broadcast on the budget, featuring a panel of court leaders and budget experts discussing the financial challenges courts are facing.

### 15

◆ At a business meeting, the Judicial Council hears the initial results from an ongoing cost-benefit study of the state's drug courts, finding that these courts save the state millions of dollars by cutting prison and jail time and reducing recidivism.

◆ The Task Force on Jury System Improvements submits its final report to the Judicial Council. The report includes 30 proposals for future actions to improve jury service, including a pay increase, free parking and public transportation, and on-site child care.

### 17

◆ The California Supreme Court selects LexisNexis to publish the *Official Reports*. LexisNexis becomes only the second publisher of the reports in the state court system's 153-year history.

### 28

◆ The Superior Court of Contra Costa County and the county's board of supervisors celebrate the opening of a family law center in Martinez. The new 39,000-square-foot facility—a collaboration of the court and county—has five courtrooms for families and children involved in the legal system.

### 30

◆ Visits to the California Courts Web site for the month top the half-million mark for the first time.

## May

### 1

◆ Courts observe Law Day with a variety of outreach activities, often involving local bar associations and other justice agencies.

◆ The AOC establishes the Court Consulting Services Program to coordinate services and improve technical assistance to the courts.

## 8

◆ The Superior Court of Ventura County is recognized by the State Information Officers Council for two of its community outreach projects, receiving a gold award for its *Annual Report and Community Guide to Court Programs and Services* and a silver award for its Tip of the Day project, in which information on court programs and services is announced on a local Spanish radio station. The same group recognizes the AOC for *Court News* and the courts' Public Information Network.

## 12

◆ In conjunction with Juror Appreciation Week, the California court system launches a statewide campaign to encourage businesses to reimburse their employees for jury service.

◆ Jurors in the Central District of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County are the first in the country to have the opportunity to listen to recordings from the award-winning National Public Radio series *Justice Talking*.

## 14

◆ Governor Davis's May revision of the fiscal year 2003–2004 State Budget contains unallocated reductions totaling \$133.7 million for the judicial branch—representing a 5 percent reduction for trial courts and 3 percent reductions for the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, AOC, and Habeas Corpus Resource Center.

## 20

◆ All Judicial Council forms can now be filled out online and printed. The online forms, enhanced with plain English instructions, help both court staff and the public by providing an easy way for litigants to complete their forms accurately and legibly.

## 22

◆ The AOC's Office of Governmental Affairs releases the first annual *Implementation Guide for 2002 Trial Court-Related Legislation*, which contains summaries of bills enacted in 2002 that require the attention of or action by the trial courts.

## 23

◆ Retired Justice David N. Eagleson, the 102nd associate justice of the California Supreme Court, dies in Long Beach at age 78, after a brief illness.

## 27

◆ The AOC publishes the online version of the *Court Administration Reference Manual*, a resource for trial court management with easy access to rules of court, standards of judicial administration, and California laws

relevant to judicial administration and court management.

## 30

◆ The AOC and 39 trial courts execute memoranda of understanding to fund telecommunications upgrades that were recommended to meet statewide standards.

## June

### 1

◆ The Probation Services Task Force releases its final report, which contains 17 recommendations for enhancing the probation system in California.

◆ The Superior Court of Stanislaus County installs a new state-of-the-art security system that uses card keys, an automatic locking system, closed-circuit television surveillance, and wireless help buttons.

◆ A report released by CFCC analyzes plans developed by California's trial courts for serving self-represented litigants, through (for example) self-help centers, written informational materials, kiosks or public terminals, information and services obtained on the Internet, expansion of interpreting, training of court personnel, and the use of lawyers and paralegals to provide information and assistance.

### 9

◆ San Bernardino County holds a groundbreaking ceremony for its Juvenile Dependency Court and Department of Children's Services building, marking the culmination of more than four years of facility planning.

◆ The AOC presents a three-day workshop to promote traffic safety and greater uniformity in traffic adjudication through an exchange of information among bench officers hearing traffic cases, representatives of law enforcement, and other interested parties.

## 12

◆ Participants at the Judicial Council's Trial Court Presiding Judges and Conference of Court Executives 2003 Spring Issues Meeting exchange experiences and ideas on baseline budget erosion, contracting and outsourcing, workloads, and evolving proposals for court fee increases and collections.

## 15

◆ New California judges, commissioners, and referees attend the two-week B. E. Witkin Judicial College in San Francisco to learn about new court assignments, review changes in the law, and exchange information with judges from across the state.

## 16

◆ The Superior Court of Monterey County becomes the first court to have its case management system hosted by the state's new Judicial Branch Technology Center in Alameda.

## 17

◆ The Judicial Council receives the 2003 Burton Award for Outstanding Reform—a national award for clear legal writing—in honor of the council's ongoing role in rewriting California's civil and criminal jury instructions.

## 18

◆ The California Supreme Court unanimously approves new language for the California Code of Judicial Ethics on the topic of membership in private organizations.

## 20

◆ Chief Justice George appoints six new members to the Judicial Council. Terms begin in September.

## 24

◆ AOC-TV airs a new educational broadcast that explores how court staff members support access to the courts for persons with disabilities.

◆ The Judicial Council releases its annual *Court Statistics Report*, summarizing 10-year caseload trends for the California court system.

## 30

◆ The National Center for State Courts issues a report on California's Centers for Complex Civil Litigation Pilot Program. It concludes that the centers improve the management of complex cases and resolve them more efficiently and effectively than do traditional courts.

◆ The Superior Court of Tuolumne County migrates to the Sustain case management system for civil and criminal cases.

## July

### 1

◆ The Superior Court of Riverside closes three of its court-houses in response to budget reductions. The court joins others throughout the state that have closed courthouses, reduced staffing and clerks' office hours, or trimmed programs and services because of budget cuts.

◆ In accordance with the Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act (Sen. Bill 371), California courts begin offering employment to eligible court interpreters.



◆ Forty superior courts join the Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program, bringing the total number of participating courts to 47.

◆ New court rules and forms permitting attorneys to give limited-scope representation to self-represented family law litigants go into effect.

◆ The Superior Court of Alameda County institutes "universal filing," enabling attorneys and the public to file documents at any one of its seven court locations, regardless of where the case will be heard by a judge.

◆ A new rule of court defining minimum contents for court calendars, indexes, and registers of action that are available to the public electronically goes into effect.

◆ The judicial branch creates the Office of Court Construction and Management, a division of the AOC that will help lead the implementation of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002.

## 7

◆ An initial report by the University of California at Los Angeles evaluates the implementation of Proposition 36 from July 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002. The report notes that the courts have helped significantly in making the implementation relatively smooth and effective and that the use of a drug court approach in handling offenders was strongly related to higher "show" rates at treatment.

◆ The AOC establishes an expanded education plan for retired judges in the Assigned Judges Program that parallels the professional standards of the active bench.

## 8

◆ The Juvenile Delinquency Domestic Violence Court in Santa Clara County is distinguished as one of the top 100 programs in the 16th annual Innovations in American Government Awards competition.

## 9

◆ AOC-TV debuts *Today's Law*, a legal update series for all judicial officers and research attorneys.

◆ The Superior Court of Santa Clara County's Web site takes the top prize out of a national field of 900 court-related Web sites in the Justice Served Top-10 Court Website Awards for 2003.

## 12

◆ The AOC signs a contract with Bearing Point to complete the development of the criminal and traffic components of the California Case Management System.

## 14

◆ The AOC hosts the Court Clerk Training Institute, consist-

ing of three one-week sessions at Pepperdine University in Malibu.

## 16

◆ At a business meeting, the Judicial Council adopts new civil jury instructions written in plain, straightforward language.

◆ The Blue Ribbon Panel of Experts on the Fair and Efficient Administration of Civil Cases submits to the Judicial Council a report recommending amendments to rules and standards to ensure that civil cases are considered individually on their merits and are managed in a flexible and practical manner.

## 22

◆ A new reference document developed by the Judicial Council's Access and Fairness Advisory Committee guides court staffs in distinguishing between legal *information*, which they may provide, and legal *advice*, which they may not.

◆ CLASS, a new online education and training resource for court trainers and staff, helps users create and participate in online courses, meetings, and other activities that involve learning, information sharing, and collaboration.

## 26

◆ President Bush nominates California Supreme Court Justice Janice Rogers Brown to the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C.

## 27

◆ The Senate approves a State Budget for fiscal year 2003–2004 that lessens Governor Davis's proposed reductions in the judicial branch budget from \$133.7 million to \$93.5 million and includes new and increased court fees. The Senate's budget proposal must still be approved by the Assembly and signed by the Governor.

## 28

◆ The courts introduce Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, the Spanish-language edition of the California Courts Online Self-Help Center and the most comprehensive Spanish-language resource about the California courts.

## 30

◆ Construction begins on a new juvenile courthouse in Sacramento County that will be nearly five times larger than the current juvenile courthouse.

## 31

◆ Chief Justice George takes office for a one-year term as president of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), a national organization that comprises the top judicial officers of the 50 states and the U.S. territories. As

CCJ president, he also chairs the board of directors of the National Center for State Courts.

## August

### 1

◆ The Superior Court of Tulare County migrates to the California-certified version of Sustain for civil cases.

### 2

◆ Governor Davis signs the fiscal year 2003–2004 State Budget. The bipartisan agreement on the judicial branch budget brokered in July in the Senate remains intact except for a reduction of \$11 million in funding for trial court security. In addition, the newly signed State Budget includes Assembly Bill 1759, which establishes new and increased court fees.

### 6

◆ The AOC's Education Division/CJER debuts Court Management University, a series of courses for trial and appellate court supervisors, managers, senior managers, and assistant executive officers on subjects such as conflict management, coaching, presentation skills, and ethics.

### 7

◆ The California Supreme Court denies relief in five cases filed before it involving the special election on the recall of Governor Davis.

◆ AOC and court leaders initiate a workforce management program to identify, forecast, and reduce expected losses of workforce talent and institutional knowledge in the judicial branch.

◆ The Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association (ABA) recognizes CFCC with its 2003 Hodson Award for Public Service, citing the center's work as "inspirational."

### 12

◆ A new report from the AOC's Center for Court Research, Innovation, and Planning presents caseload trends and factors, both internal and external, that potentially contributed to workload fluctuations in the courts from 1980 to 2000.

◆ The Judicial Council approves the allocation of funds to (1) expand courts' support services that increase nonresidential parents' access to and visitation with their children and (2) ensure the health, safety, welfare, and best interest of those children.

### 15

◆ Retired Justice Hollis Best, whose legal and judicial career spanned more than half a cen-

tury, dies at age 77 after a brief illness.

## 28

◆ Some 900 Orange County teachers, along with Attorney General Bill Lockyer, gather at the Superior Court of Orange County's annual Domestic Violence Education Conference in Irvine to learn to detect in children's behaviors the early warning signs of violent homes and to report those signs to the authorities.

## 29

◆ At a business meeting, the Judicial Council adopts new guidelines on specific areas of court operations; approves proposed 2004–2005 budgets for the trial courts, appellate courts, and Judicial Council/AOC; recommends to Governor Davis and the Legislature that California's Complex Civil Litigation Pilot Program become part of the core operations of the six pilot courts and expand complex litigation departments to other California courts where appropriate; adopts a series of recommendations for enhancing and improving probation services; and approves the criteria and weighting factors to be used to prioritize proposed court construction and renovation projects throughout the state.

## September

### 1

◆ The Superior Courts of Imperial and Humboldt Counties migrate to the California-certified version of Sustain for civil cases at the Judicial Branch Technology Center.

### 3

◆ Governor Davis signs Assembly Bill 1641, giving the Chief Justice additional flexibility in making necessary orders when an emergency threatens the orderly operation of the courts.

### 5

◆ Governor Davis signs Senate Bill 940, a Judicial Council-sponsored bill requiring the council to adopt guidelines and partner with counties to collect fees, fines, forfeitures, penalties, and assessments imposed by the courts.

### 6

◆ In his State of the Judiciary address at the State Bar annual meeting in Anaheim, Chief Justice George discusses the need to continue providing meaningful access to justice for all Californians despite the budgetary challenges facing the judicial branch.

◆ Governor Davis signs Senate Bill 129, providing guidelines for the transfer of existing bud-

getary funds. The bill also requires the Judicial Council to circulate for comment any proposed amendments to those policies and procedures that relate to budget monitoring and reporting.

## 11

◆ Governor Davis signs Assembly Bill 1180, a Judicial Council-sponsored bill that permits the court to impose monetary sanctions against prospective jurors who fail to respond to a juror summons. The Governor also signs Assembly Bill 513, which addresses making scheduling accommodations for correctional peace officers who are called for jury service, and Senate Bill 144, which addresses public notice and input for administrative and financial decisions affecting the trial courts.

## 24

◆ The Assembly Bill 1058 Child Support Training Conference brings together administrative, accounting, and court clerical staff; family law facilitators; and child support commissioners to hear about the latest developments in child support.

## 26

◆ The Superior Court of Siskiyou County introduces 14 visual storytelling brochures that walk litigants through eight subject areas of the legal system, using colors and symbols to describe court processes from the public's point of view.

## 29

◆ Chief Justice George appoints Justice Judith McConnell administrative presiding justice of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District.

## 30

◆ The Superior Court of Contra Costa County launches its legal information Web site, which offers instructions, videos, and other resources for self-represented litigants in guardianship, domestic violence, and other cases.

## October

### 1

◆ Unionized court employees in Sacramento County return to work after staging a one-day walkout over contract negotiations. The action follows similar labor disputes in Orange County in July and in San Joaquin County in August.

◆ An Orange County judge orders the Los Angeles County sheriff's union to halt the deputy sickouts that are affecting the operation of eight Los Angeles courthouses and other county buildings.



## 2

◆ The AOC's Innovative and Effective Practices Unit, in coordination with the Judicial Council's Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee, offers the first in a series of regional trainings to assist existing collaborative courts and support the development and implementation of new collaborative justice programs.

## 14

◆ The *Official Reports*, a compilation of all of California's precedential appellate decisions from 1850 to the present, are put online and made searchable.

## 15

◆ Ninety-five justices of the Supreme Court and state Courts of Appeal attend the three-day Appellate Justices Institute in San Francisco, an annual educational program designed to increase the effectiveness of judges and staff through high-quality continuing education and professional development.

## 20

◆ CJER's 2003 Presiding Judges Orientation and Court Management Program brings together court executive teams—presiding judges, assistant presiding judges, supervising judges, and court executive officers—to discuss individual and collective court governance and leadership responsibilities.

## 21

◆ At a business meeting, the Judicial Council adopts court rules and time standards designed to make the state's civil delay reduction program more flexible and practical; adopts the third installment of a multiyear project to simplify and clarify the appellate rules of the California Rules of Court; amends certain rules to specify the factual findings that are required to seal records; and adopts rules and forms to revise the method of appointing an educational representative for a child adjudged a dependent or ward of the court.

◆ The Judicial Council amends court rules to expand public access to trial court budget information and administrative decisions.

## 22

◆ Chief Justice George and Governor-elect Schwarzenegger meet for the first time during the Governor-elect's initial visit to Sacramento following his victory in the special recall election.

◆ Participants at the Judicial Council's Trial Court Presiding Judges and Conference of Court Executives 2003 Fall Issues

Meeting discuss budget concerns, labor relations, and other human resources issues.

## 28

◆ In response to court closures resulting from multiple wildfires in San Diego County and a request from the presiding judge, Chief Justice George issues an emergency order declaring the existence of an "immediate threat to the orderly operations of the Superior Court of San Diego County." The order authorizes the court to take certain actions to deal with the emergency.

◆ The Continuity of Operations Working Group—made up of court and AOC representatives—holds its initial meeting with consultants who will assist with the development of comprehensive emergency planning strategies for the California courts.

◆ CFCC releases a progress report on the Violence Against Women Education Project, which gives the courts information, educational materials, and training on their role in responding to cases that involve domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

## 29

◆ On the first day of the preliminary hearing in the Laci Peterson murder case, the entire block in front of Stanislaus County's Modesto courthouse is filled with media trucks and personnel.

## November

## 1

◆ Chief Justice George appoints 46 new members to fill vacancies on 13 of the Judicial Council's advisory committees. The committees study and make recommendations to the council on issues related to judicial administration.

◆ The Superior Court of Siskiyou County goes live on CARS (Court Accounting and Reporting System) at the Judicial Branch Technology Center.

## 5

The AOC introduces a model for delivering human resources services to the judicial branch. Posted to the Serranus Web site for review and comment, the model is customer-focused and includes suggestions for utilizing court staff, realizing cost efficiencies, and using technology to improve the delivery of services.

## 6

◆ CFCC introduces *Zero to Five Training Guidelines*, a resource for Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs interested in starting infant- and toddler-specific projects.

## 13

◆ Thirty-nine staff members of Los Angeles-area consulates, representing 36 countries, receive first-hand instruction on the legal system at the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's first-ever Court-Consular Corps Conference.

## 14

◆ The Collaborative Court-County Working Group on Enhanced Collections, charged with making recommendations for a comprehensive statewide court collections program, meets for the first time in San Francisco.

## 17

◆ Judicial branch leaders successfully augment trial court budget allocations for fiscal year 2003–2004 by more than \$22 million. The additional discretionary funding is in accordance with authority specified in the Budget Act of 2003 and is approved following a series of discussions with the directors of the AOC and the state Departments of Finance and Personnel Administration.

◆ Chief Justice George swears in Arnold Schwarzenegger as the state's 38th governor during a ceremony at the Capitol in Sacramento.

## 24

◆ The Superior Court of Sacramento County implements a series of changes to speed the distribution of orders in dependency cases. The new procedures result in more than a 50 percent reduction in processing time and help ensure timely distribution of information to parties involved in the case. The project is one of numerous local "reengineering" efforts to increase efficiency in court operations around the state.

## December

## 1

◆ Fifteen courts complete upgrades of their jury management systems that allow prospective jurors to check and reschedule their jury service over the phone or online.

◆ New research updates from CFCC offer the latest statistics and trends in data on children involved in the juvenile delinquency and dependency systems. The updates are part of a larger California Juvenile Statistical Abstract, a compilation of statewide data concerning children and families involved in the courts and related institutions.

## 2

◆ In one of the largest public outreach events in state court history, the first three cases of the California Supreme Court's two-day oral argument session in San Jose are broadcast live on the California Channel, a cable network with 5.6 million viewers. High school and law students attend the session and ask questions of the justices, and countless more view the broadcast at their schools, aided by a special curriculum package developed by the Sixth Appellate District and the Santa Clara County Office of Education.

◆ The AOC develops the Court Migration Assessment Checklist, an online resource that identifies factors for trial courts to consider when transitioning away from county-provided human resources services.

## 3

◆ The Superior Court of San Luis Obispo County goes live on CARS at the Judicial Branch Technology Center.

## 4

◆ In one of the largest statewide conferences on juvenile and family law issues ever held, nearly 1,500 members of the court and legal community gather in Los Angeles to commemorate the centennial of California's juvenile courts.

◆ The AOC signs a contract with Deloitte Consulting to develop the integrated architecture, civil, small claims, and probate components of the California Case Management System.

## 5

◆ At a business meeting, the Judicial Council adopts a new three-year operational plan for the judicial branch; adopts a rule of court requiring trial courts to seek input from the public before taking action on certain administrative and financial issues that are likely to have a significant impact on the public; approves updated guidelines for the Trial Court Improvement Fund and Judicial Administration Efficiency and Modernization Fund; votes to encourage the use of a new Model Jury Summons and "Court and Community" information pamphlet and endorses their voluntary statewide implementation; and agrees to sponsor Assembly Bill 129, which sets forth the Legislature's intent to enact provisions authorizing a county to create a dual-status protocol for children in juvenile court, allowing them to receive services as both dependents and wards of the court.

◆ The Judicial Council announces the 2003 Distinguished Service Awards, the highest honor for those who demonstrate extraordinary leadership

and make significant contributions to the administration of justice in California.

◆ The Judicial Council announces the recipients of the 2003 Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts, honoring the contributions made by individual courts to the administration of justice.

## 11

◆ Division One of the Fourth Appellate District launches an online manual that instructs self-represented litigants who are undertaking an appeal.

## 16

◆ Chief Justice George hosts a budget summit of more than 100 leaders from the judiciary and the bar in San Francisco to discuss how to ensure stable and adequate funding for the court system.

◆ The AOC develops a new Innovative and Effective Practices Web site on Serranus that provides a forum for courts to share their promising programs with the entire judicial branch.

## 19

◆ The Superior Court of Santa Clara County debuts its Public Access Case Information Site, which allows visitors to search court calendars and case indexes for civil cases.

## 22

◆ Following a 6.5 magnitude earthquake, Chief Justice George grants an emergency order extending statutory deadlines related to court business in San Luis Obispo County.

◆ The California Supreme Court adopts amendments to the Code of Judicial Ethics affecting canons on speech by judicial candidates, ownership of bonds, and sexual harassment.

## 23

◆ Chief Justice George appoints Justice Roger W. Boren administrative presiding justice of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District.

## 30

◆ The AOC releases the 2003 *Court News Legislative Summary*, highlighting the more than 130 bills that affect the courts or are of general interest to the legal community and that were signed into law during the first year of the 2003–2004 Legislative Session.

## 31

◆ Multiple courts prepare to test a new, flexible and scalable case management system that will eventually operate in all courts in the state. ■



# Q&A Rule Making 101

## Conversation With Justice Norman L. Epstein

*The Judicial Council adopted or approved hundreds of new and amended California Rules of Court and forms that became effective January 1. As chair of the council's Rules and Projects Committee—also known as RUPRO—Second Appellate District Justice Norman L. Epstein touched every one of them. One might say that, in this capacity, Justice Epstein is helping improve the administration of justice one rule at a time.*

*Overseeing the council's rule-making process is not the only means by which Justice Epstein has worked to improve the judicial branch. He has served on countless committees, task forces, and working groups in the areas of judicial education, alternative dispute resolution, indigent defendants, gender bias, civil and small claims, and criminal law, among others.*

*Continuing his extracurricular work, Justice Epstein was appointed to the Judicial Council in 2001 and became chair of its RUPRO Committee in September 2003. Court News spoke with Justice Epstein about RUPRO and the council's rule-making process.*

### What is RUPRO? What are its areas of responsibility, and how is a rule of court created?

RUPRO's principal function is to review proposed rules of court and Judicial Council forms. New rules and forms are generally recommended by one or more of the Judicial Council's standing advisory committees. But before they are voted on by the council, they are reviewed by RUPRO.

The RUPRO Committee initially reviews the new rule or

form to decide whether it is ready to be distributed for public comment. All comments are then carefully considered by the advisory committees as well as RUPRO. Typically a large number of comments are received on complicated rules or rules that stir public interest. After any necessary changes are made, the new rule or form is ready to be heard by the full council.

RUPRO can recommend that a rule or form not be adopted,

**Sometimes rules and forms must be developed as soon as possible and cannot wait for the next public comment cycle. For example, new legislation affecting the courts often calls for the council to enact and implement new rules by a specific date.**

but that is rare. Sometimes RUPRO decides that the matter needs further review by the advisory committee before it goes to the council. We usually manage to work out any problems before the rule or form goes before the council. Final adoption of the rule or form requires a vote by the council and an effective date for its implementation.

### How has the rule-making system changed over the last several years?

Two reforms have standardized the rule-making process to minimize the burden on interested parties seeking to comment on proposed rules and forms.

First, new matters are sent out for comment only after they have been fully thought out and well developed. This was not always the case in the past.

Second, proposed rules and forms are sent out for public review on a regular cycle during

the year—once in the spring and once in the fall. That way, people can anticipate their arrival. However, exceptions are made for urgent matters that require immediate action. Sometimes rules and forms must be developed as soon as possible and cannot wait for the next public comment cycle. For example, new legislation affecting the courts often calls for the council to enact and implement new rules by a specific date.

### What is the Judicial Council's position on the use of plain language in the rules of court and Judicial Council forms?

First, it is much easier to criticize a rule or statute for inadequacies than to sit down and draft one. It is a humbling experience to try and write a rule or statute that is scrupulously correct yet easily understood by all. Questions almost always can be raised about a sophisticated or complex rule

**It is much easier to criticize a rule or statute for inadequacies than to sit down and draft one. It is a humbling experience to try and write a rule or statute that is scrupulously correct yet easily understood by all.**

as to apparent inconsistencies or the need to state an idea more clearly. Often bells and whistles added to clarify matters only complicate the rule even further.

There is a general movement in the legal community—with respect to statutes, rules, contracts, and other legal documents—to use plain language in documents so that someone without legal training can understand it. The Judicial Council rules have been systematically rewritten with that focus. In some cases it is a challenge to attain readability and still maintain accuracy.

The council's advisory committees and RUPRO try to draft rules and forms that are as clear as we can make them before they are sent out for public comment. A particular area of focus in this regard is the policy statement that accompanies a new rule. RUPRO emphasizes that a new rule should clearly state the policy reason for its creation. A number of proposed rules submitted to RUPRO have been sent back to advisory committees to be reworked because of that concern.

### The Judicial Council approved the use of new plain-language civil jury instructions effective January 1. How is RUPRO involved in this effort?

Since the new jury instructions are approved by the council, they are technically adopted through a rule of court. The council strongly encourages judges to use the new instructions, but they are not required to do so.



Justice Norman L. Epstein  
Court of Appeal,  
Second  
Appellate District

Judges are free to use other instructions they feel are more appropriate or more accurate.

The RUPRO Committee will be reviewing further recommendations by the council's standing committee on civil jury instructions. It will be RUPRO's responsibility to make sure any proposed instructions are accurate and clear. Judging by the high quality of the committee's work to date, we anticipate a smooth process.

### What is the difference between the California Rules of Court and the California Standards of Judicial Administration? Are both necessary?

A rule gives permission or direction, akin to an authorization; a standard is a goal or an objective—although, at times, the lines between the two is blurred.

RUPRO's view is that the standards should be retained and not folded into the rules of court. However, they should be reorganized in two ways. First, the standards need to be better structured by subject matter. Second, the standards should be more readily accessible. To achieve that, comments appended to the rules of court need to contain references to applicable standards on the same subject matter. ■

## New Council Rules and Forms

The Judicial Council at its October and December 2003 meetings adopted and amended hundreds of California Rules of Court and council forms, which went into effect on January 1. Areas of the law addressed by the new rules include appeals, trial setting, continuances, case disposition time standards, jury instructions, the graduated probate filing fee, and public access to trial courts' administrative decisions. New and amended forms are available for appellate, civil and small claims, criminal, family and juvenile, probate, and traffic matters. The changes are listed by topic and rule/form number at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/rules/amendments.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/rules/amendments.htm) and [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms/latest.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms/latest.htm).



Judge J. Richard Couzens

*Judge Couzens is a former member of the Judicial Council and past chair of its Criminal Law Advisory Committee.*

# Personal Use of Weapons and Strikes

JUDGE J. RICHARD COUZENS  
SUPERIOR COURT OF PLACER  
COUNTY

The Supreme Court in *People v. Rodriguez* (1998) 17 Cal. 4th 253 addressed the level of proof necessary to establish as a “strike” a conviction for assault with a deadly weapon or assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury (Pen. Code, § 245(a)(1)). The court observed that under the relevant portions of Penal Code section 245(a)(1), aggravated assault becomes a serious felony only if the defendant *personally* inflicts great bodily injury or *personally* uses a deadly weapon or firearm. (Pen. Code, § 1192.7(c)(8), (23)). Since it is possible to commit an assault under section 245 without personally using a weapon or actually causing bodily injury, the least adjudicated elements of section 245 do not constitute a strike. Accordingly, the People’s reliance on an abstract of judg-

ment that reflected only the fact of conviction under section 245 (“ASLT GBI/DLY WPN”) was not sufficient to prove the strike. The court stressed that the People were entitled to go beyond the

The People sought to prove the strike with three items of evidence: the abstract of conviction, which reflected a conviction for “PC 245(a)(1)” and “ASSLT GBI W/DLY WPN”; a Department of

the voters enacted Proposition 21, which added a number of new crimes as serious felonies under Penal Code section 1192.7(c). The court found that the initiative deleted the requirement of personal use of a deadly weapon. Section 1192.7(c)(31) designates as a serious felony any “assault with a deadly weapon, firearm, machinegun, assault weapon, or semiautomatic firearm or assault on a peace officer or firefighter, in violation of Section 245.” There is no requirement that the defendant have *personally* used the weapon or firearm.

Examining the documentation submitted by the prosecution in support of the strike allegation, the court found there was substantial evidence supporting the jury’s finding that the defendant previously had been convicted of assault with a deadly weapon, an offense now listed as a serious felony in section 1192.7(c)(31).

*Luna* raises several interesting questions. The opinion appears on firm ground to the extent that it applies to section 245(a)(1) convictions based on the use of a deadly weapon or firearm. Unquestionably, section 1192.7(c)(31) makes no reference to personal use of a weapon, unlike sections 1192.7(c)(8) and (23), which still contain such a requirement. Care must be taken, however, in determining the exact nature of the defendant’s conviction. In discussing the abbreviations on the abstract showing conviction of “ASLT GBI/DLY WPN,” the court in *Rodriguez* seems to suggest that the abstract could designate either assault with force likely to produce great bodily injury or assault with a firearm. As noted in *Luna*, the abbreviation “ASSLT GBI W/DLY WPN” “closely parallels” the abbreviation in *Rodriguez*. Is *Luna* suggesting that “GBI/DLY” as used in *Rodriguez* may designate either assault with force likely to produce great bodily injury or use of a weapon but “GBI W/DLY” means only use of a deadly weapon?

Courts must be careful in applying the law as outlined by *Luna*. If there is no question that the defendant was convicted only of an assault with a deadly weapon or firearm, there is no requirement that the People prove personal use of the weapon. If there is a question regarding the exact nature of the conviction or if the defendant was convicted only of assault with force likely to produce great bodily injury, additional documentation must be produced to prove the strike. If the strike is based only on the “force likely” aspects of section 245(a)(1), the People still must prove that the defendant *personally* inflicted great bodily injury on the victim. ■



least adjudicated elements and use the entire record of conviction to prove the necessary strike conduct, but failed to do so.

The factual circumstances of *Rodriguez* are substantially similar to those of *People v. Luna* (2003) 113 Cal.App.4th 395 (03 D.A.R. 12,413). The defendant previously had been convicted of a violation of section 245(a)(1).

Corrections fingerprint card reflecting the same information; and the defendant’s booking photograph. The defendant sought a reversal of the finding on the strike based on *Rodriguez*.

Justice Paul Turner, in writing for the court, observed that the law had changed since the Supreme Court decided *Rodriguez* in 1998. On March 7, 2000,

## California Foster Care Passes Federal Review

The federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in November issued an addendum to its initial report released in July. The addendum finds that California’s title IV-E foster care maintenance program is in substantial compliance with federal requirements.

### INITIAL FEDERAL REPORT

California’s foster care placement eligibility system underwent a DHHS review to determine its level of compliance with the requirements of title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the federal entitlement program that pays approximately \$3 billion annually to cover the cost of foster care placements nationwide. That initial report found that California was in “substantial noncompliance” and, as a result, would have to develop a more detailed compliance plan and be subject to a second, more extensive review and possible future fines and penalties.

### JUDICIAL BRANCH ASSISTS WITH REVIEW

In response to the first report, California’s Judicial Review and Technical Assistance (JRTA) team reexamined a case found to be noncompliant due to a lack of required judicial findings and orders. (The Administrative Office of the Courts’ Center for Families, Children & the Courts [CFCC] established the JRTA team in 1995 after California failed a federal audit of the title IV-E eligibility program.)

JRTA reexamined a case identified in the federal report as lacking the required judicial findings. With assistance from the local court, JRTA found documentation verifying that the required judicial determination had been made after all. The California Department of Social Services forwarded this documentation to the federal reviewers in October.

“It was rewarding and reassuring for the court that it had made and properly documented the appropriate findings,” says Eryn Shomer, the JRTA staff member who investigated the case. “The court was in fact doing what the federal government required.”

Subsequently, DHHS issued an addendum to its initial report, deeming “California’s title IV-E foster care maintenance program to be in substantial compliance with Federal child and provider eligibility requirements,” and cited the documentation collected by JRTA as one of the factors for the reversal of its initial decision. Consequently, California is not required to develop a more detailed compliance plan and is not subject to a second, more extensive review of its foster care placement eligibility system. The next federal review will not occur until at least June 2006.

● For more information, contact Aleta Beaupied, CFCC’s Judicial Review and Technical Assistance team, 415-865-7687; [aleta.beaupied@jud.ca.gov](mailto:aleta.beaupied@jud.ca.gov). ■

### CJAC 2004

## Operating as a Branch: Solving Problems Together

February 25-26, San Francisco

The California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC) brings together members of the Judicial Council and its standing advisory committees, administrative presiding justices, presiding and assistant presiding judges, clerk/administrators and assistant clerk/administrators of the Courts of Appeal, executive officers and assistant executive officers of the superior courts, supervising judges, members of court executive committees, and court administrators and branch managers to meet and discuss issues of branchwide interest.

● For more information, contact Karen Moen, 415-865-7823; e-mail: [karen.moen@jud.ca.gov](mailto:karen.moen@jud.ca.gov).



# Kleps Awards Honor Court Programs

Recognizing innovation in court administration, the Judicial Council on December 5 announced the recipients of the 2003 Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts. Created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first administrative director of the California courts, the award recognizes and honors the contributions made by individual courts to the administration of justice.

The winners were selected from a field of 38 nominees by the Kleps Award Committee, whose members include judges, court staff, AOC staff, and community representatives. The committee’s review and selection process included site visits to all the nominated programs.

“Choosing but 10 recipients was a difficult task, as courts both large and small continue their efforts to improve our justice system,” says Justice Ronald B. Robie of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, who chairs the Kleps Award Committee. “All of this is being done in spite of serious budget and staff limitations.”

- Each program nominated for a Kleps award must:
- Be a project of a California court;
  - Reflect the intent of at least one of the six goals of the Judicial Council’s strategic plan (access, fairness, and diversity; independence and accountability; modernization of management and administration; quality of justice and service to the public; education; and technology);
  - Be innovative;
  - Have results, outcomes, or benefits that demonstrate an impact on the court and the public it serves; and
  - Be replicable in other courts.

These annual awards are given in five categories distinguished by the numbers of authorized judicial positions (AJPs) in the counties’ court systems. Formal presentation of the awards will occur at the California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC), scheduled for February 25– 26. Each winning court will be invited to display an overview of its project at the conference. In addition, the award-winning programs will be featured on the California Courts Web site, the Serranus Web site, and the AOC-TV satellite network.

Descriptions of the winning programs follow.

## 2003 KLEPS AWARD WINNERS

### Category 1 (2–6 AJPs)

**Night Court for Child Support Calendar  
Superior Court of Inyo County**

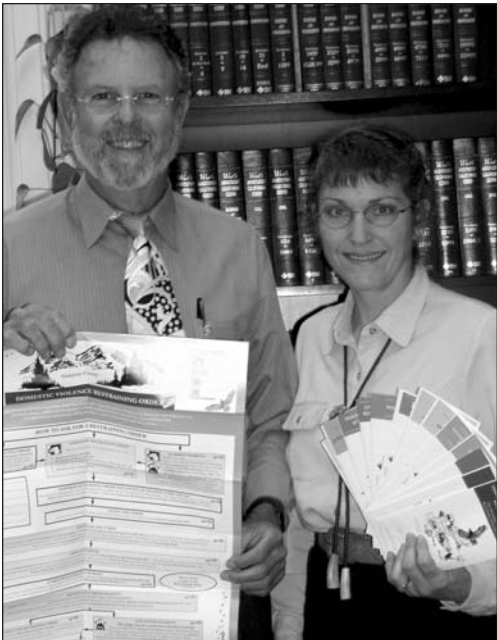
This unique court combines a dedicated child support calendar and a night court, allowing working parents to attend hearings without being hurt economically. The efficiency and effectiveness of the court are enhanced by the increased participation by parents and by the availability of resources such as a family law facilitator.

● Contact: Terry Lee, Child Support Commissioner, 760-387-0045; e-mail: [terrylee@qnet.com](mailto:terrylee@qnet.com)

**Visual Guides to the Courts  
Superior Court of Siskiyou County**

The court produced visual storytelling brochures that walk litigants through eight subject areas of the legal system. To design the brochures from the public’s perspective, the court organized seven public forums around the county, collaborated with other agencies and stakeholders in the justice system, and met with representatives of distinct cultures in the community. The court staff distributed the guides at courthouses, family resource centers, public health and mental health organizations, hospitals and clinics, schools, nonprofit social service agencies, public libraries, law libraries, law enforcement agencies, the local bar association, and Native American tribal communities. Six of the guides have been translated into Spanish.

● Contact: Lisa Hicks, Grant Specialist, 530-841-4005; e-mail: [lhicks@siskiyou.courts.ca.gov](mailto:lhicks@siskiyou.courts.ca.gov)



Presiding Judge Roger T. Kosel (left) and Grant Specialist Lisa Hicks show off the Superior Court of Siskiyou County’s visual storytelling brochures, which walk litigants through eight subject areas of the legal system. *Photo: Brenda Dawson, Siskiyou Daily News*

### Category 2 (7–19 AJPs)

**Guardianship Facilitation and Outreach  
Superior Court of Yolo County**

This guardianship clinic, facilitated by a court staff attorney, assists self-represented grandparents and other caretakers with the guardianship process. The goals of the program are to provide permanency for children and their caregivers, prevent parental abuse and neglect, and reduce the trauma and expense of dependency proceedings. The staff attorney and Judge Donna M. Petre, Co-Presiding Judge of Yolo County’s Unified Family Court, publicize the guardianship program to government agencies, child protection groups, grandparents’ advocates, and other interested organizations. As a result, guardianship petitions have increased by more than 100 percent since the program began in 1999.

● Contact: Karen Blank, Staff Attorney, 530-666-8372; e-mail: [kblank@yolocourts.com](mailto:kblank@yolocourts.com)

### Category 3 (20–49 AJPs)

**Spanish Self-Help Center  
Superior Court of Fresno County**

Since 1990 the number of Hispanic individuals in Fresno County has increased by 48.6 percent, and this group now represents 44 percent of the total population. In an effort to provide equal access to all its citizens, the court’s self-help center assists the underserved Spanish-speaking, self-represented litigant population by offering educational information and language assistance.

Centro de Recursos Legales provides:

- Daily access to Spanish-language self-help instructions for family law, unlawful detainer, civil harassment, and guardianship issues;
- Review of legal documents by a court examiner;
- Access to family law clinics; and
- In-court interpreter assistance.

● Contact: Patty Wallace, Grants Manager, 559-443-5560; e-mail: [pwallace@fresno.ca.gov](mailto:pwallace@fresno.ca.gov)



The Superior Court of Fresno County’s Spanish self-help center assists the underserved Spanish-speaking pro per population by offering educational information and language assistance. *Photo: Jason Doiy*

**Tip of the Day Radio Program  
Superior Court of Ventura County**

The Tip of the Day program consists of five-minute public service radio announcements made live in Spanish, Monday through Friday at 10:30 a.m., on KOXR, a Spanish-language radio station. The court started the program in mid-2002 as a way to promote the court’s no-cost self-help legal access centers. The topics are based on questions that have been posed by people seeking help at the centers. Each tip is intended both to provide general information to the community and to inform citizens of the wide range of services and programs offered by the court.

Many individuals using the court’s self-help centers have reported that they found out about the centers through the Tip of the Day radio program. Since the program was implemented, the number of people seeking assistance at the self-help legal access center in La Colonia, a predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhood of Oxnard, has more than doubled.

● Contact: Robert Sherman, Deputy Executive Officer, 805-654-2964; e-mail: [robert.sherman@mail.co.ventura.ca.us](mailto:robert.sherman@mail.co.ventura.ca.us)

### **EZLegalFile Service Bureau Superior Court of San Mateo County**

The EZLegalFile Service Bureau is an Internet-based interactive program that enables litigants to complete Judicial Council forms in family law, small claims, and unlawful detainer cases. The San Mateo County court developed the bureau, which is available to any trial court in the state, in response to requests from other courts wishing to provide this access to citizens in their counties. To date, 12 superior courts, representing more than 20 percent of the state's population, have joined the EZLegalFile Service Bureau. As of June 2002, more than 15,000 litigants throughout California have completed their forms using EZLegalFile. In addition, the AOC recently awarded the San Mateo County court a grant to expand the number of EZ LegalFile partner courts to 24.

● Contact: Jill Selvaggio, Management Analyst, 650-599-1519; e-mail: jselvaggio@sanmateocourt.org



The EZLegalFile Service Bureau is an Internet-based interactive program that enables litigants to complete Judicial Council forms in family law, small claims, and unlawful detainer cases.

### **CATEGORY 4 (50+ AJPS)**

#### **Teachers' Courthouse Seminar Superior Court of Los Angeles County**

The Teachers' Courthouse Seminar brings high school government teachers to a local courthouse for a one-day interactive observation of the criminal justice system. The seminar provides teachers with accurate information about the trial courts and their function in the criminal justice system. The program also provides educational materials about the courts that teachers can use in their classrooms. These include an interactive CD-ROM titled *The Court in Action: Spotlight on the Criminal Justice Process*, which helps high school teachers explain the work of the criminal courts to their government classes.

● Contact: John A. Clarke, Executive Officer, 213-974-5401; e-mail: jclarke@lasuperiorcourt.org

#### **Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN!) Superior Court of Orange County**

The project, implemented in 2000 in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, is a network of Web-based legal services and interactive kiosks that assist self-represented litigants. I-CAN!'s

multilingual, interactive, and tutorial modules enable self-represented litigants to create properly formatted pleadings and complete legal forms using a touch screen or Web interface. Users can obtain immediate technical assistance from legal aid staff by using Internet phone technology that has been integrated with the system.

Currently, the Orange County court has 13 modules that are available in both English and Spanish and 5 that offer instruction in Vietnamese. Use of the I-CAN! system has spread to nine additional California counties and is proposed for use in seven more. Courts in Oklahoma, Massachusetts, and Virginia have funded I-CAN! projects of their own, while New York, Minnesota, and the District of Columbia have applied for similar funds.

● Contact: Jeannette McSkane, Division Director, Management Services, 714-834-5316; e-mail: jmcskane@occourts.org

### **CATEGORY 5 (APPELLATE COURTS)**

#### **Step by Step Civil Appellate Manual Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division One**

The manual instructs self-represented litigants who are undertaking an appeal in Division One of the Fourth Appellate District. In addition, the appendix provides a wealth of forms and samples to assist the user. The manual is being used as the text in a course on appellate practice given by the San Diego County Public Law Library. It is available in a print version free of charge and is on the court's Web site.

● Contact: Stephen M. Kelly, Clerk/Administrator, 619-645-2762; e-mail: steve.kelly@jud.ca.gov

#### **The Courts as Curriculum Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District**

In an unprecedented outreach effort, the Fifth Appellate District combined its Courts as Curriculum program with the California Supreme Court's special oral argument session in Fresno. More than 100 students attended the session held at the appellate court, and it was broadcast live on television, giving thousands an opportunity to see the court in action.

Days before the Supreme Court's session, justices from the Fifth Appellate District participated in a panel discussion with high school students about the judicial process. That discussion was videotaped and made available to Central Valley high schools to help them prepare for the special Supreme Court session. In addition, Kern County educators worked with the appellate court to prepare a study guide that summarized the history of the Supreme Court and some of the legal issues it would confront during its arguments. The study guide was made available on the Internet.

● Contact: Kay Frauenholtz, Clerk/Administrator, 559-445-5491; e-mail: kay.frauenholtz@jud.ca.gov ■



The Fifth Appellate District combined its Courts as Curriculum program with the California Supreme Court's special oral argument session in Fresno. More than 100 students attended the session, which was broadcast live on television. *Photo: Paul Sakuma, Associated Press*

## **Members of the 2003 Kleps Award Committee**

**Justice Ronald B. Robie, Chair**  
Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

**Michael D. Planet, Vice-Chair**  
Executive Officer, Superior Court of Ventura County

**Tina M. Burkhardt**  
Executive Officer, Superior Court of Glenn County

**Jeanne Caughell**  
Administrative Office of the Courts, Bay Area/Northern Coastal Regional Office

**Yvonne Choong**  
Administrative Office of the Courts, Northern/Central Regional Office

**Justice Richard David Fybel**  
Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District

**Lisa Galdos**  
Superior Court of Monterey County

**Michael Glisson**  
Superior Court of Nevada County

**Judge Mary Thornton House**  
Superior Court of Los Angeles County

**Marilyn K. James**  
Superior Court of San Diego County

**Sheila Kuck**  
Superior Court of Siskiyou County

**Judge William J. Murray, Jr.**  
Superior Court of San Joaquin County

**Florence Prushan**  
Administrative Office of the Courts, Southern Regional Office

**Kelly Sims**  
Superior Court of Santa Clara County

**Sylvia White-Irby**  
Superior Court of Los Angeles County



## Education & Development

### New Guidebook For CASAs Assisting Young Children

The Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) has developed the *Zero to Five Training Guidelines*, a resource for Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs interested in starting projects centered on infants and small children. The guidebook was introduced to CASA directors at their November meeting, and staff from 20 CASA programs around the state signed up to receive a copy.

#### CONTENTS OF GUIDEBOOK

*Zero to Five Training Guidelines* presents steps for developing a program that targets children

less than six years of age—the fastest growing segment of the juvenile dependency population. The guidebook includes suggestions for building relationships with community partners and educating the bench and other system stakeholders on the unique needs of children in this age group.

The guidebook contains detailed information on developmental issues facing young children, including mental health, nutrition, and medical needs and conditions. In addition, it includes material on the juvenile dependency process and the role CASAs play in it.

● For more information or to order a copy of *Zero to Five Training Guidelines*, contact Stephanie Leonard, CFCC, 415-865-7682; e-mail: stephanie.leonard@jud.ca.gov. ■

specific information, so they pertain to any court in California.

The San Joaquin County court produced all of the videos with help from a grant from the Administrative Office of the Courts. The court plans to produce videos on additional subjects, if funding allows, and has already identified a need for one on small claims collections.

● For more information or to order copies of the videos, contact Leanne Kozak, Public Information Officer, Superior Court of San Joaquin County, 209-468-8120; e-mail: lkozak@courts.san-joaquin.ca.us.

### Journal on Families, Children in Courts

The Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) in December published volume 4 of its annual journal. The volume's articles represent a wide spectrum of viewpoints on issues affecting children, families, and their interactions with the courts.

The *Journal of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts* draws on the expertise of academics, judicial officers, lawyers, psychologists, social service providers, and litigants involved in the family court system. In the new volume the authors explore a variety of approaches to increasing effective judicial decision making and improving access to the family courts. Their topics include the effect of DNA testing on paternal responsibility, barriers to justice in family court for parents with disabilities, mental health treatment of children involved in acrimonious custody disputes, the responses of the child welfare system to fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, innovative approaches to domestic and family violence, and long-term effects of divorce on children.

● For more information or a copy of the journal, visit CFCC's Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/resources/publications/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/resources/publications/) or contact Ethel Mays, 415-865-7739; e-mail: cfcc@jud.ca.gov.

### Access to NCSC Resources Made Easy

A new Internet-based service from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) provides easy access to comparative data, research reports, best practices, and much more.

CourtTopics is NCSC's virtual filing cabinet, providing information on a variety of subjects related to state court administration. Organized for easy scanning and in-depth research, the database includes resource guides, answers to frequently asked questions, and overviews of more than 100 topics, including alternative dispute resolu-

tion, case processing, court facilities and security, juries, and juvenile law.

● To access the CourtTopics database, go to NCSC's Web site at [www.ncsconline.org/](http://www.ncsconline.org/). For more information, e-mail knowledge@ncsc.dni.org.

### Juvenile Court Deskbook Issued

The Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) in January published a new deskbook for judicial officers that serves as a guide to the day-to-day management of a juvenile court.

The responsibilities of a juvenile court judicial officer are many and unique, and the juvenile court system regularly interacts with a wide variety of public and private organizations and the community. The *Juvenile Court Administrative Deskbook* provides an introduction to this complex system for newly assigned judicial officers and serves as an ongoing resource for those with experience in the field.

The guide covers a wide range of topics, including the organization and functions of agencies involved with the juvenile justice system, financial management and fiscal responsibilities, court and community collaboration, media relations, and court administration. Each chapter includes a list of additional sources of information.

CFCC is sending every California juvenile court judicial officer a copy of the deskbook.

● For more information or additional copies, contact Aleta Beaupied, CFCC, 415-865-7687; e-mail: aleta.beaupied@jud.ca.gov.

### New Bills Affect The Courts

A special edition of *Court News* highlights the more than 130 bills that were signed into law during the first year of the 2003–2004 Legislative Session and that affect the courts or are of general interest to the legal community.

The *Court News Legislative Summary*, published in December, provides brief descriptions of the bills and indicates whether each measure is of primary interest to judges, court administrators, and/or practitioners in trial or appellate courts. The bill descriptions are intended only to serve as a guide for identifying legislation of interest and are not complete statements of statutory changes.

Chaptered bills and legislative committee analyses can be found at [www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html).

● For more information, contact Thomas Stevenson, AOC's Office of Governmental Affairs, 916-323-3121; e-mail: thomas.stevenson@jud.ca.gov. ■

## Resources

### Best Practices in Emergency Management

Emergency management has long been a concern of courts, but after the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, the focus sharpened dramatically. In response to increased concern, the Best Practices Institute of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) recently published a paper titled *Emergency Management for Courts*.

The paper identifies some practices courts should consider as first steps in preparing their emergency management plans. Understanding that state budgets are tight, the Best Practices Institute staff took pains to outline steps that can be implemented without significant expense. Each step is accompanied by examples of how it can be carried out and resources for further information.

Some of the steps are:

- Ensure visible court leadership.
- Survey and prioritize emergency management needs.
- Develop a plan to communicate internally.
- Don't let resources prevent planning.

● To download *Emergency Management for Courts* from NCSC's Web site, visit [www.ncsconline.org/Projects\\_Initiatives/BPI/EmergencyMngmnt.htm](http://www.ncsconline.org/Projects_Initiatives/BPI/EmergencyMngmnt.htm).

### New Videos Available to Courts

The Superior Court of San Joaquin County developed five new informational videos for

court users and is offering to ship them free of charge to other superior courts in California.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDERS

The longest of the videos (18 minutes), *The Realities of Domestic Violence*, is directed to first-time domestic violence offenders. The video describes the consequences of violent actions and presents alternatives in practical terms. It is available in Spanish as well as English and is accompanied by a brochure.

"After researching this topic we discovered that there is quite a bit of information for domestic violence victims but little directed toward abusers," says Leanne Kozak, Public Information Officer for the San Joaquin County court. "We felt it was important to provide the facts to offenders to help them understand the gravity and consequences of their actions."

The tape is being used by the San Joaquin County Probation Department's Family Violence Intervention Team, the county jail, the district attorney's Domestic Violence Unit, Asistencia Latina de Violencia Domestica, and other agencies.

#### SELF-HELP VIDEOS

The court also produced a series of four self-help videos—each 7 to 10 minutes in length—based on questions frequently asked of court staff. The topics include small claims, DUIs, domestic violence restraining orders, and child support.

The videos are designed for use by self-represented litigants in self-help centers, public libraries, schools, and other locations. They contain no locally







## Court Briefs

### Wildfire Relief Fund Raises Money, Spirits

Officials from the Superior Court of San Bernardino County report that more than \$4,600 was donated to the court's Employee/Wildfire Relief Fund for court personnel who lost homes in the devastating fires last October.

"On behalf of the San Bernardino courts, I want to thank the larger court community in California for supporting the relief effort," says Executive Officer Tressa S. Kentner. "Personal thank-you notes were sent to everyone who contributed."

Katie Dunbar, one of the employees who lost a home in the fires, conveyed in an e-mail to all San Bernardino County court staff: "I find myself constantly reminded of all the kindness and generosity my family and I have received following the recent fires. I would like to extend a very special thank you to all those who have offered assistance—material things and in thought and spirit."

### Sonoma Court Launches Family and Juvenile Programs

The Superior Court of Sonoma County in November implemented two new programs to aid families and children involved in the court system.

#### JUVENILE CONFERENCE

The court helped bring together a variety of professionals who work with children to learn about the issues facing families and youths and the community resources available to them.

In partnership with the county's Probation Department and Department of Human Services, the court presented the first annual Juvenile Court Sharing Mutual Best Interests Conference. The conference included presentations on making families and children a priority

for the courts, advocating for the educational needs of children, and the court's Juvenile Court-School Liaison program.

#### FAMILY LAW ASSISTANCE WINDOWS

New family law assistance windows were operated as a pilot project at the Sonoma County court for the month of November. They served an average of 50 customers per day.

Court staff at the windows answered litigants' questions, corrected paperwork, provided accurate information, and offered referrals to appropriate legal and social services. Matters for which help was given included divorce, child custody, child support, and protective orders.

The court closed the family law assistance windows in December because of a hiring freeze but is exploring reallocating its staff to start up the project again.

● For more information on the conference or on family law assistance windows, contact Debbie Lamb, Superior Court of Sonoma County, e-mail: cintown2@juno.com.

### Supreme Court Clarifies Voting Procedures

The California Supreme Court amended its Internal Operating Practices and Procedures to clarify the procedures a justice may use to communicate his or her vote on a pending matter when that justice is temporarily away from the court.

The high court made the amendments in conjunction with the filing of its decision in *People v. Billa*, S111341. Prior to *Billa*, a justice could vote on a case or sign an opinion only when the justice was physically present in California. In *Billa* the Supreme Court modified that rule, explaining that modern methods of communication had rendered it obsolete.

● To view the Internal Operating Practices and Procedures of the California Supreme Court, visit [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/supreme/iopp.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/supreme/iopp.htm). ■

## Chief Justices' Summit



Chief justices from the states' highest courts came together in San Francisco in January for a meeting of the national Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ). California Chief Justice Ronald M. George is the current president of CCJ. He presided over the event, which featured discussions related to budget challenges; electronic information; NAFTA's impact on state court judgments; and principles of effective judicial independence, governance, and accountability. Photo: Jennifer Cheek Pantaleon



The California court system's public Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/) and Serranus, the courts' password-protected Web site at <http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/>, continually add information and features to keep the public, judges, and court staff up to date on judicial programs and resources. Following are recent additions.

#### New Council Rules and Forms

New and amended California Rules of Court and council forms that went into effect on January 1 are listed by topic and number.

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/rules/amendments.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/rules/amendments.htm) and [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms/latest.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms/latest.htm)

#### HR Tool: Checklist for Migration From County Services

This new resource identifies factors for trial courts to consider when transitioning away from county-provided human resources services.

<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/hr/>

#### Site for Courts to Share Innovative Practices

This site assists courts in sharing their promising programs with the entire judicial branch. Programs already posted include Fresno's ACTION Center, which assists defendants in complying with court orders at one centralized location, and the Kern County "quick-pay" court window at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/iep/>

#### Travel Expense Procedures

A new posting identifies policies and procedures for reimbursement of travel expenses for judges and employees of the trial courts.

<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/finance/tctravel.htm>

#### Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency Stats

New research from the Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts has yielded the latest trends and statistics on children involved in the juvenile delinquency and dependency systems.

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/JSA\\_Delinq\\_FS5.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/JSA_Delinq_FS5.pdf) and [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/JSA\\_Dep\\_FS1.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/JSA_Dep_FS1.pdf)

● Not a Serranus user? For access, e-mail [serranus@jud.ca.gov](mailto:serranus@jud.ca.gov).

## Judges Honored at Juvenile Court Conference



Family and juvenile court judges attending the Celebrating California's Juvenile Court Centennial Conference were given certificates of appreciation for their work to improve the lives of California children involved in the legal system. One of the largest statewide conferences on juvenile and family law issues ever held, the conference in Los Angeles on December 4-6 brought together more than 1,500 participants including judicial officers, attorneys, social workers, probation officers, court staff, juvenile justice and child welfare professionals, and other juvenile court stakeholders. Photo: Grace Chen







FEB 18–20	National Conference on Community-Based Access to Justice, San Francisco
FEB 25–26	California Judicial Administration Conference, San Francisco
MAR 26–28	California Judges Association Retired Judges Meeting, Monterey
APR 19–23	Spring Education Week, Los Angeles
APR 30–MAY 2	California Judges Association Midyear Meeting, Palm Springs

All Judicial Council business meetings will be held at the Administrative Office of the Courts in San Francisco unless otherwise noted.

FEB 27                      APR 23

● Contact: Secretariat, 415-865-7640; e-mail:  
jcservices@jud.ca.gov.  
Judicial Council meeting information is also posted on the  
California Courts Web site at  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/).

FEB 19	Train-the-Trainer: Summary Judgments, Burbank
APR 13	Training Coordinators Conference, San Francisco
APR 14	ADA Coordinators Conference, San Francisco
APR 19-21	Family Law Institute (part of Spring Education Week), Los Angeles
APR 19-21	Probate and Mental Health Institute (part of Spring Education Week), Los Angeles
APR 19-23	Continuing Judicial Studies Program (CJSP): Spring Session (part of Spring Education Week), Los Angeles
APR 21-23	Juvenile Law Institute (part of Spring Education Week), Los Angeles
APR 21-23	Domestic Violence Courses (part of Spring Education Week), Los Angeles

FEB 17	Managing @ Court: Having Difficult Conversations, Burbank
FEB 23	Managing @ Court: Critical Thinking, Burbank
FEB 25	Managing @ Court: Creating a Motivational Environment, Burbank
MAR 3	Managing @ Court: Conflict Management, San Francisco
MAR 4	Managing @ Court: Using Statistics in the Courts, Sacramento
MAR 10	Managing @ Court: Building Your Court Team, San Francisco
MAR 10	Managing @ Court: Conflict Management, Burbank
MAR 11	Leadership Expedition, Burbank
MAR 16	Managing @ Court: Building Your Court Team, Burbank
MAR 18–19	Management Foundations, Sacramento

MAR 23	Leadership Expedition, Online
MAR 24	Managing @ Court: Ethics for Managers, Burbank
APR 1	Managing @ Court: Presentation Skills, San Francisco
APR 7	Managing @ Court: Presentation Skills, Burbank
APR 8	Management University Elective Series: Project Management, Burbank
APR 12	Managing @ Court: On Becoming a Leader, Burbank
APR 14	Managing @ Court: On Becoming a Leader, San Francisco
APR 15	Managing @ Court: Critical Thinking, Sacramento
APR 16	Leadership Expedition, Burbank
APR 26	Leadership Expedition, Online
APR 28	Managing @ Court: Using Statistics in the Courts, San Francisco
APR 29	Managing @ Court: Having Difficult Conversations, Sacramento

MAR 3	San Francisco
MAR 17	Santa Ana
MAR 18	Santa Ana
MAR 25	Fresno
MAR 30	Santa Clara County
APR 7	Santa Clara County
APR 8	San Francisco
APR 14	Sacramento
APR 30	Palm Springs
APR 30	Riverside

FEB 23-27	New Judge Orientation, San Francisco
MAR 8-12	New Judge Orientation, San Francisco
APR 19-23	New Judge Orientation, San Francisco

APR 15–16	Computer Class for Judges, San Francisco
APR 20–22	Computer Courses for Judges (part of Spring Education Week), Los Angeles

Note: Computer class students must have a Serranus user name and password to participate.

FEB 21	Court Interpreter Ethics Workshop, Irvine
MAR 2-4	Labor Relations Academy, Burbank
MAR 9	ADA/Access Coordinators Training, San Francisco
MAR 9-11	Labor Relations Academy, Sacramento
MAR 26	ADA/Access Coordinators Training, Burbank
APR 1	Labor and Employee Relations Southern Regional Forum, teleconference
APR 6	Labor and Employee Relations Bay Area/ Northern Coastal Regional Forum, San Francisco
APR 8	Labor and Employee Relations Northern/ Central Regional Forum, Sacramento

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